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AND WIN**

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MCCONAUGHEY**
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cigar aficionado
RATED **96** Year
2014

Serie V MELANIO

GRAN RESERVA LIMITADA

After much work we arrived at a cigar that,
like Serie V, is full flavored yet smooth.

The long filler tobaccos are a blend of Oliva Nicaraguan
Habano that emphasizes tobacco from the Jalapa region,
an area known for a more nuanced leaf than the Esteli or
Condega regions. This carefully aged Jalapa blend
produces a particularly flavorful smoke.

The wrapper is a proprietary seed grown by Oliva in
Ecuador. The Melanio is a tremendously smooth cigar
made up of hand picked, aged tobaccos
that overflows with flavor.



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Oliva Cigar Co. 2018

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The Oliva Serie V Melanio is hand rolled using expertly fermented ligero fillers, leaves known for their robust and rich flavors. Five years in the making, this special cigar honors the family's founder, Melanio Oliva. The Serie V Melanio is sure to exceed premium cigar smokers' highest expectations.

The Oliva family has a long and proud tradition of growing premium tobaccos and producing some of the finest premium cigars. The Oliva Serie V line of cigars are the finest the family has produced to date and are heralded as some of the most sought after in the cigar world.

OLIVA

Top 25 Cigar
for over

- 95 2018 Serie
- 92 2018 Serie
- 92 2017 Serie
- 92 2017 Serie
- 92 2017 Serie
- 94 2016 Serie
- 90 2016 Serie
- 95 2015 Serie
- 92 2015 Serie
- 96 2014 Serie
- 92 2013 Serie
- 92 2012 Serie
- 91 2011 Serie
- 92 2010 Serie
- 90 2009 Serie
- 92 2008 Serie
- 94 2007 Serie
- 91 2006 Serie
- 91 2005 Serie



rs of the Year
er a decade

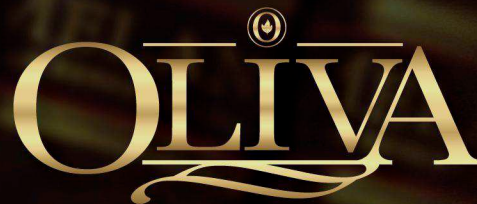
- V Belicoso
- O Churchill
- V Torpedo
- V Belicoso
- V Maduro Churchill
- V Melanio Robusto
- O Churchill
- V Melanio Maduro
- V Maduro Churchill
- V Melanio Figurado
- O Churchill
- V Belicoso
- V Double Robusto
- V Maduro Especial
- V Belicoso
- V Robusto
- V Torpedo
- G Cameroon Robusto
- O Classic Olé

Serie V MELANIO GRAN RESERVA LIMITADA

After much work we arrived at a cigar that,
like Serie V, is full flavored yet smooth.

The long filler tobaccos are a blend of Oliva Nicaraguan
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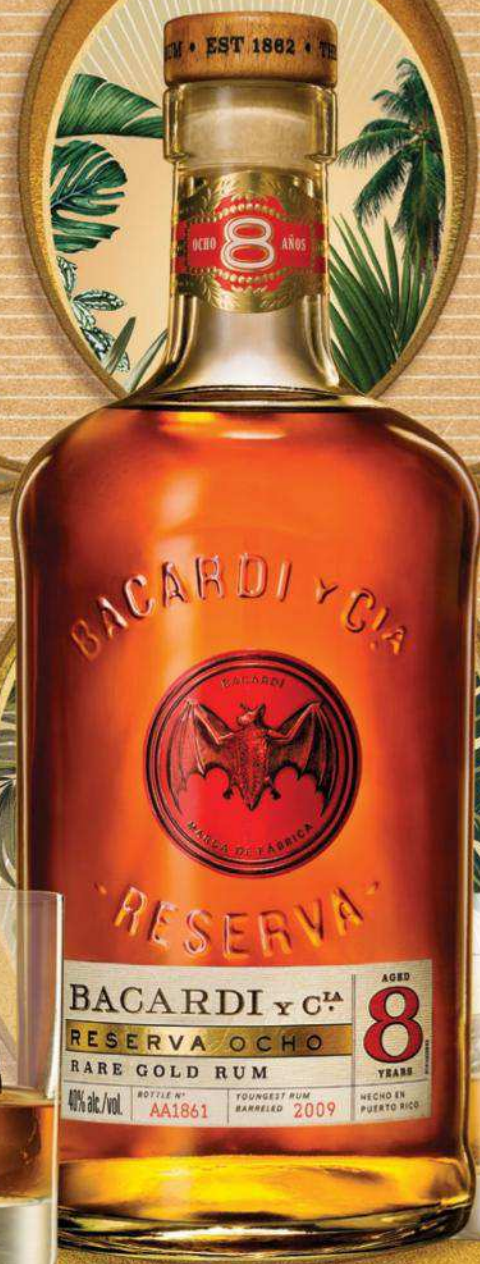
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Oliva Cigar Co. 2018

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contents

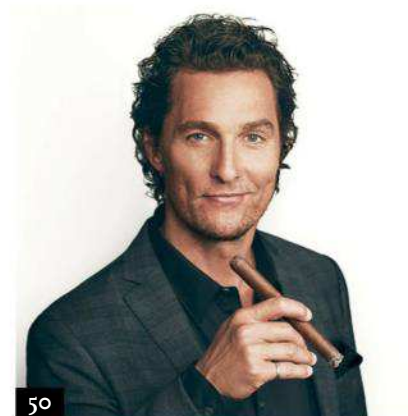
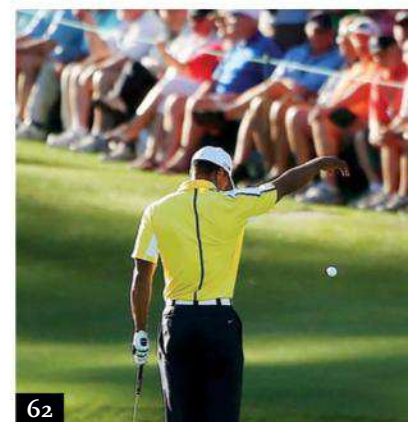
july/august 2018

up front

- 14 CIGAR HIGHLIGHTS
- 17 EDITORS' NOTE
- letters 18 OUT OF THE HUMIDOR
- the best 25 THE GOOD LIFE GUIDE
- 27 ELECTRONICS Wireless speakers with French curves.
- 29 PLACES Old-fashioned ocean living gets an update.
- 30 WHEELS Alfa Romeo's first SUV puts the accent on "sport."
- 32 STYLE How to doff a cowboy hat.
- 35 GOURMET A grill with its own meat elevator.
- 38 DRINK Putting the icing on your cocktail.
- 40 TIME Watches that find it easy being green.
- 43 CIGARS Ashtrays take a walk on the wild side.
- 45 SPORTS Golf glasses aren't for nerds anymore.
- 46 FUN A new urban craze that kicks ax.

features

- cover 50 THE McCONNAISSANCE CONTINUES
With three movies that span comedy, drama and action, Matthew McConaughey proves he has the chops to play whatever he wants.
- golf 62 AN END TO AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION
After letting viewers rat players out for their infractions, the USGA is returning to a "watch, don't tell" policy.
- hockey 74 OVER KNIGHTS' SUCCESS
For the fledgling Las Vegas NHL team, a first-year trip to the Stanley Cup finals was the ultimate icebreaker in a town that needed a win.
- gambling 83 SPORTING CHANCES
Legal sports betting is opening up across America and it's not just the casinos and racetracks that are waiting to cash in.



ON THE COVER
Matthew McConaughey retains leading-man luster. portrait by John Russo for *Cigar Aficionado*

COMPLEXITY IN WRAPPED BOLDNESS



SURGEON GENERAL WARNING: Cigar Smoking Can Cause Cancers Of The Mouth And Throat, Even If You Do Not Inhale.

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gambling **89** **HOW TO BET ON SPORTS**
Our pigskin prognosticator, Danny Sheridan, explains how to parse the odds or take sides on the spread in baseball, football and basketball.

drink **93** **SUMMERTIME AND THE DRINKING IS EASY**
When the thermometer reads torrid, turn to the cool, refreshing cocktails that take the heat off and add flavor to your glass.

cigars

tasting **100** We rate 79 cigars in six sizes: Churchills (100), corona gordas (102), double coronas (106), figurados (108), panetelas (110) and robustos (112), plus our new buying guide (114) as well as our vintage cigar tasting, Connoisseur's Corner (116).

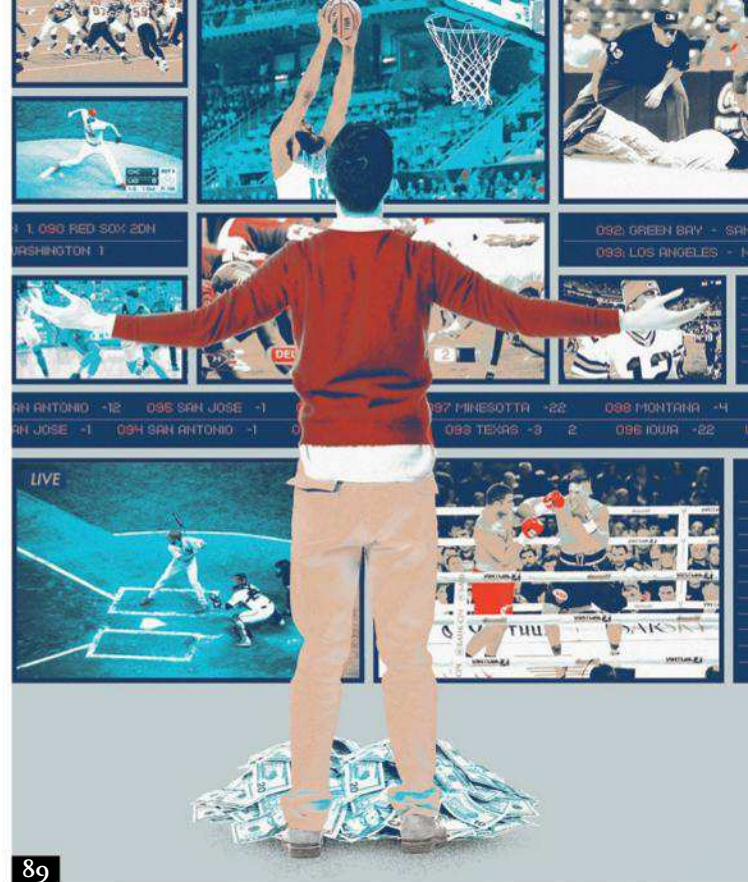
profile **119** **RICHARD OVERTON**
America's oldest man (and oldest cigar aficionado) turned 112 and celebrated, just like any other day, with cigars.

brands **120** **HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JOYA DE NICARAGUA**
After years of success and tumult, Joya de Nicaragua marks its 50th birthday, just as the country becomes the leading source of cigars in the U.S.

cuba report **125** **HABANOS FESTIVAL**
Marking its second decade, Cuba's Habanos Festival welcomed a vast crowd, including every type of cigar lover from across the globe.

129 **MOMENTS TO REMEMBER**
Photos from our readers as they enjoy themselves and their cigars.

136 **MADE FOR YOU**
A beer growler that purrs; destination recording with a view; rocking the Hemingway Hat; the right flask for the task; hand-blown rocks glasses; and a gentleman's pocketknife.



89



93



120

highlights

It was an impressive showing for Cuba in this issue, as a cigar from the island nation topped (or tied) four of the six size categories. We rated 79 cigars overall, and many of them were on the longer side. Short smokes are nice for a walk, but when you have the time, we say indulge yourself and go big.



TOP CHURCHILL

H. UPMANN SIR WINSTON

CUBA

94

This traditionally sized Churchill is one of the most coveted vitolas in the brand's portfolio and, therefore, can be difficult to track down.



TOP CORONA GORDA

VEGAS CUBANAS GENEROSOS

NICARAGUA

93

This Nicaraguan cigar from the Garcia family tied with another Nicaraguan, The Wise Man Maduro Robusto, for the top position among corona gordas.



TOP DOUBLE CORONA

ASHTON AGED MADURO NO. 60

DOM. REP.

92

A dark and alluring double corona that tied with two others for top honors in this category: Nicaragua's Padrón 1964 Anniversary Series "A" and the Cuban Ramon Allones Gigantes.



TOP FIGURADO

DIPLOMATICOS NO. 2

CUBA

92

One of Cuba's younger brands (it was established in the 1960s), this line currently comes in only one vitola.



TOP ROBUSTO

JUAN LOPEZ SELECCIÓN NO. 2

CUBA

92

While this Cuban brand is often made in special, limited-edition sizes, the Selección No. 2 is part of the core, regular-production line.



TOP PANETELA

OLIVA SERIE V LANCERO

NICARAGUA

91

The all-Nicaraguan Serie V Lancero from Oliva scored the same as the My Father No. 4 Lancero to earn the top spot in the panetela category.



BEST BUY

GILBERTO OLIVA RESERVA 6X50

NICARAGUA

90

Carrying a retail price of only \$6.10, this cigar sports an Indonesian wrapper and pays homage to the late patriarch of the Oliva Cigar Co.

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The Ringmaster

Created by master blender and pioneer of the big ring gauge cigar, Ernesto Perez-Carrillo, this true INCH-sized cigar features a 64 ring gauge and is E.P. Carrillo's first Nicaraguan Puro INCH cigar. A cigar that is easy on the draw with flavor profiles including spicy top notes with a set of earthy mid notes and a subtle sweet finish, the INCH Ringmaster will keep you wanting more.

Available in two sizes, 5 x 64 and 6 ½ x 64.



CARRILLO

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Place Your Bets

Gentlemen, you can bet.

In May, the U.S. Supreme Court finally put an end to the longstanding ban on sports betting in most U.S. states. The court, in a 6-3 decision, struck down the 1992 law that made betting on sports illegal in every state save for Nevada. While that law is 26 years old—as old as this magazine—Washington’s war on sports betting goes back far longer, to the days prior to World War II. American citizens have long been denied the legal right to easily place a bet on baseball, football, basketball and other games.

The antiquated law did nothing to stop sports betting, of course—it simply made it against the law. An estimated \$150 billion to \$200 billion is bet annually on sports, the vast majority of it illegal. Sports betting is a big business, and we understand its allure. A bet makes watching a game more entertaining, whether you have a big wager on your favorite baseball team, a small bet with a friend on the NBA championship or a few \$10 boxes in your office Super Bowl pool.

It was high time to end the ban. The Supreme Court ruling will allow states to open legal avenues for consumers to bet on sports, from luxe sports books in the style of Las Vegas or London, to websites bringing legal sports betting to your phone, tablet or

laptop. As one of the few magazines to regularly cover gambling, we have dedicated two major features to this subject. Turn to page 83 to read all about the ruling and how it will affect you, and then read Danny Sheridan’s expert guide to betting on sports on page 89. It’s fun to place a bet, but it’s more fun to win. Sheridan will point you in the right direction.

And when it comes to sports, no one could have bet that the Vegas Golden Knights—a team playing its first season in the National Hockey League—could have done so well so soon. It’s the greatest Cinderella story in the history of pro sports, and associate editor Andrew Nagy flew out to Las Vegas in the middle of their epic playoff run, and found out that the people of Las Vegas love the Knights for reasons that go beyond their success on ice. Turn to page 74.

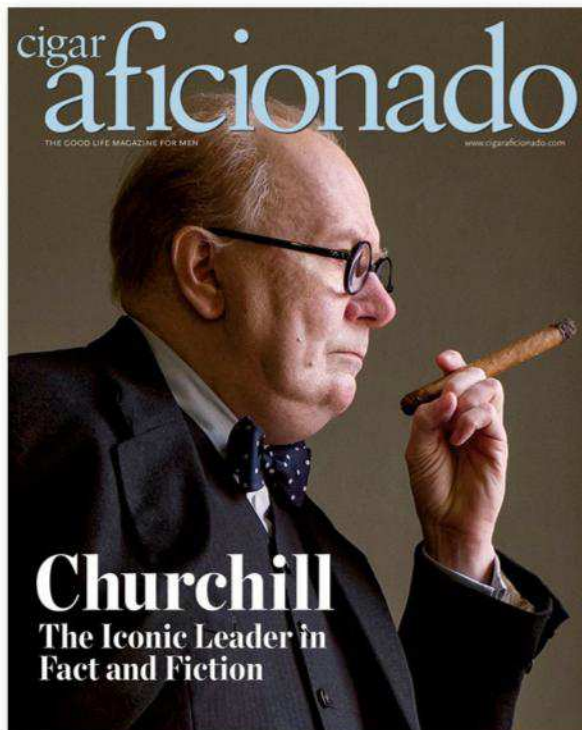
The Knights have made hockey fans out of both of us.

Enjoy the issue.

MARVIN R. SHANKEN
EDITOR & PUBLISHER

DAVID SAVONA
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

out of the humidor



“As I was about halfway through the terrific piece on Churchill, I turned back to learn the author’s name—Jon Meacham. Absolutely first rate.”
—Ken Platzer, New York, New York

Dear Marvin,

I want to congratulate you on another marvelous edition of your magazine. I particularly enjoyed each of the Churchill articles. I have read several biographies of him and there seems to be no end to the stories and revelations of the incredible character that he was. I thoroughly enjoyed the cigar perspective [“Smoking and Drinking Like Churchill,” May/June 2018] as this is an angle that I had not read about, at least from the point of view of those who know cigars. I must say that I burst out laughing at the segment that stated he “smoked a staggering amount of cigars by any reasonable standard.” (Written by someone who very nearly smokes cigars for a living.)

On another note, it is refreshing to read a publication that takes pride in the writing. I’m sure, at some point, you have read a “publication” that had more spelling and grammatical errors than an elementary school term paper. Thank you for having exceptional writing skills and enlisting guest writers and others that take the time to create a coherent and enjoyable piece of writing.

Ashley Troutman

Thompson’s Station, Tennessee

Dear Marvin,

Superb article about Churchill as one of the most unassuming yet powerful leaders of our time. He was a magnificent orator with the conviction to see his beliefs through. He always told the truth, never having to wonder what he said. Gary Oldman masterfully captured Churchill through film and no doubt did complete justice to the history. Keep up the great work.

Frank Kohler

Scottsdale, Arizona

Dear Marvin,

As I was about halfway through the terrific piece on Churchill, I turned back to learn the author’s name—Jon Meacham. Of course. Absolutely first rate. Thank you.

Ken Platzer

New York, New York

Dear Marvin,

I’ve been a faithful reader of your fine magazine for over 20 years now. As a member of the International Churchill Society, I must congratulate you on a great read. Although he’s been gone for many years, we can still draw from Churchill’s wisdom in our present times.

On another note, I want to thank you for putting out such a wonderful publication. CIGAR AFICIONADO is a respite from the craziness which seems to permeate our society. The time spent with a Bourbon and a cigar reading CIGAR AFICIONADO always brings me back to center.

Moe Fox

Valley Stream, New York

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E-MAIL letters@cigaraficionado.com • **LETTERS** 825 8th Ave., 33rd floor, New York, NY 10019 • **EDITORS’ BLOGS** Find out what the editors of CIGAR AFICIONADO are thinking—and smoking—in our editors’ blogs. David Savona, Gordon Mott, Jack Bettridge, Gregory Mottola and Andrew Nagy want to hear from you. The conversation is taking place on cigaraficionado.com.

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Dear Marvin,

Without yielding to the urge to make uncharitable comments regarding a few of the actors you chose to highlight, or their individual performances as Churchill, it remains inconceivable to me a publication of the quality of CIGAR AFICIONADO would produce such a special issue without including the actor responsible for the single best interpretation of Churchill ever, Robert Hardy. While he may be best known for his role as Cornelius Fudge in *Harry Potter*, he should be revered for his riveting performances as Churchill, which began with the 1981 miniseries "The Wilderness Years," which covers the darkest period of Churchill's career. At this point in his life, almost all of England viewed Churchill as a man of great intellect, but one unfit for office, lacking in judgment and substantially past his prime. Hardy's riveting portrayal is so redolent and so touching, it uniquely captures the spirit of a man who spent his life in the arena but was by then nearly broken by the vicissitudes of fate and of a life lived so publicly.

I suggest any serious Churchill enthusiast make the time to view and enjoy Mr. Hardy's rendition—drink in one hand and cigar in the other, of course.

Gerard Toohey

Chicago, Illinois

Editors' Response: We never tire of watching actors bring Churchill to the screen, big or small. It sounds like we have another program to watch.

Dear Marvin,

I just got back from my third trip to Cuba and things have changed. We were able to visit a charity that takes impoverished children and trains them to try out for the Cuban National Circus. They organized a performance just for my wife and I that was incredible. We made a large donation, but the children were more fascinated with the backpack full of candies we had brought them. They had never seen a Starburst!

We found the best cigars. All the shelves were well stocked. The menu at Santy was all about tuna the day we were there and they are adding items due to your magazine. The service is wonderful, the fish incredible and the kindness surpasses anything you will find anywhere.

The Cuban people love Americans. I would beg the current administration to swing the door wide open for America. The government is not being hurt by the decline in tourism, but the spirit of free enterprise is being smothered by current policy. I will be returning in July since my humidior could always use a few more quality cigars.

Craig Smith

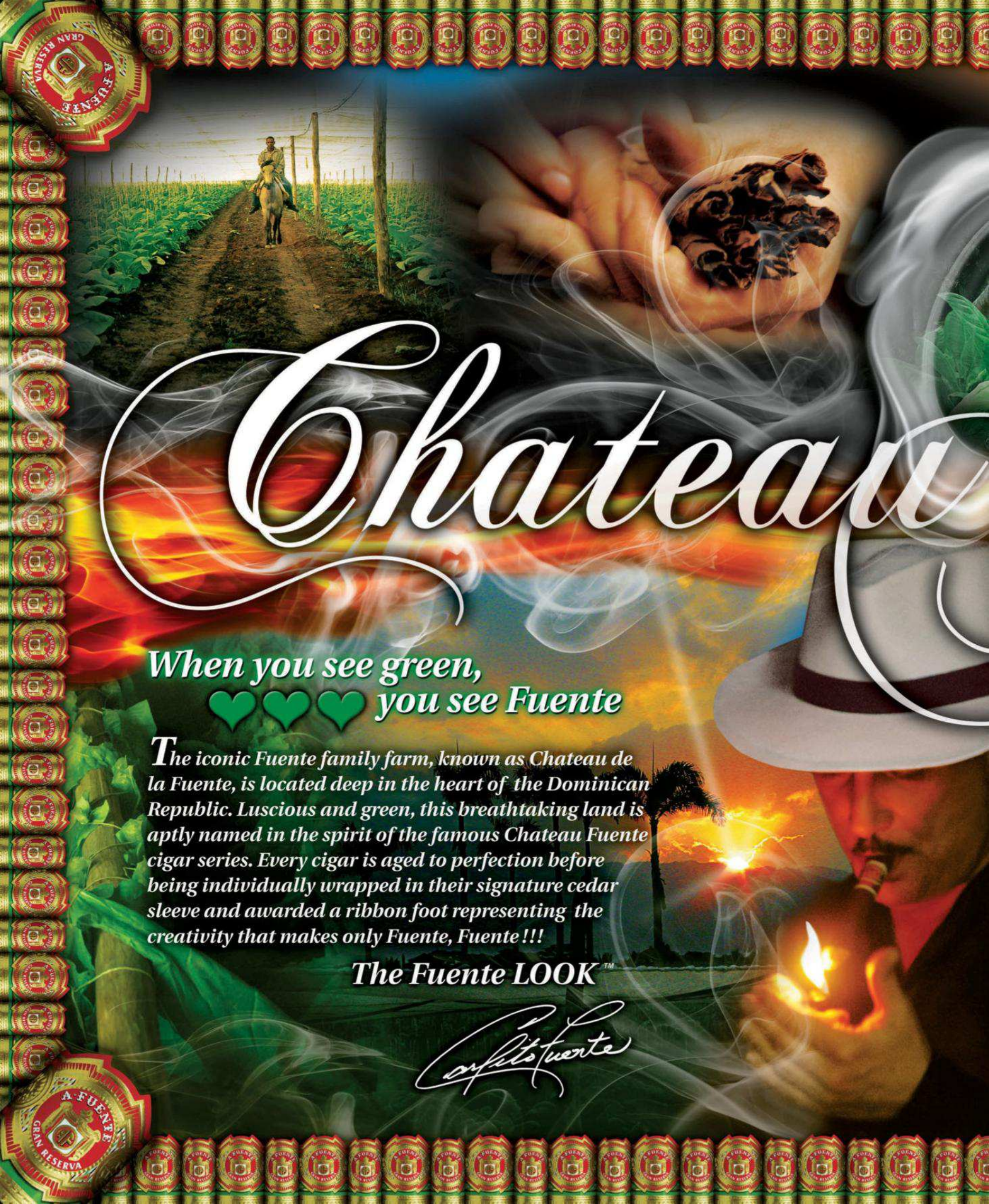
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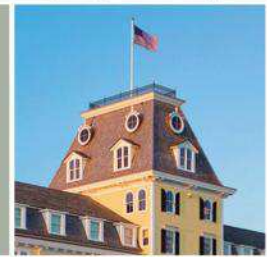
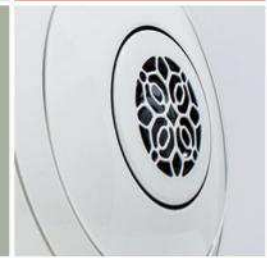
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good life guide

Living well demands that we indulge in things that are of superior quality and excellent origin. This guide aspires to find and recommend the best of everything to aficionados of the good life.

electronics	27	DEVIALET WIRELESS HI-FI SPEAKER
places	29	THE OCEAN HOUSE, RHODE ISLAND
wheels	30	ALFA ROMEO STELVIO QUADRIFOGLIO
style	32	THE COWBOY HAT
gourmet	35	KALAMAZOO GAUCHO GRILL
drink	38	THE ICE CUBE COMETH
time	40	GREEN WATCHES
cigars	43	MAVROS ASHTRAYS
sport	45	GOLF SUNGLASSES
fun	46	URBAN AX THROWING





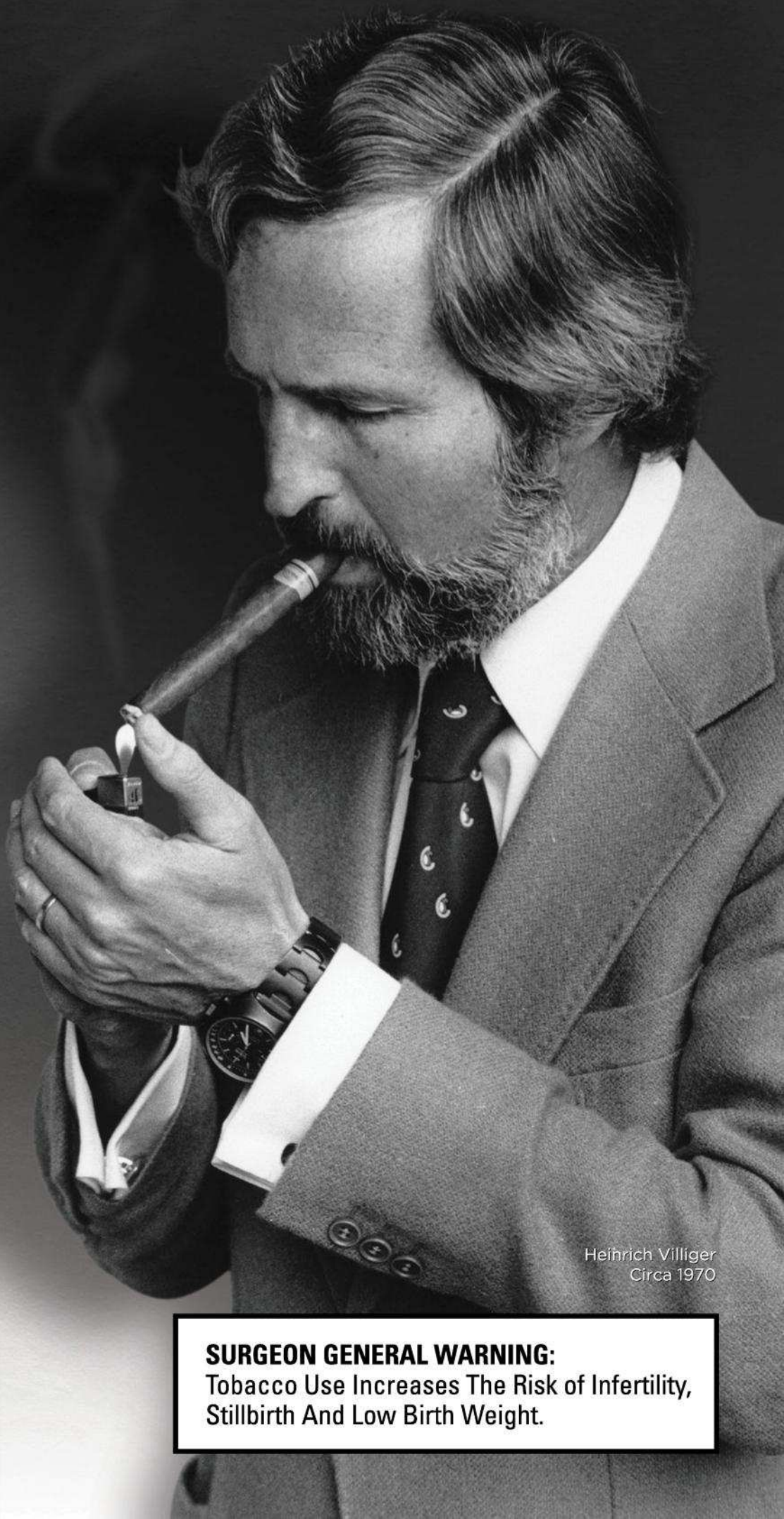
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Heinrich Villiger
Circa 1970

SURGEON GENERAL WARNING:
Tobacco Use Increases The Risk of Infertility,
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Devialet Wireless Hi-Fi Speaker

There's no ignoring the futuristic curves and curiously ornate front grill of the Devialet Gold Phantom wireless speaker. It does, after all, look suspiciously like something that's fallen off a NASA space station and gone adrift. But once you hear its dense, powerful bass, its precise midrange and its clean sonic purity, you'll realize that you're in the company of perhaps the finest-sounding wireless speaker to ever land in the realm of audio gadgetry.

As otherworldly as it may seem to be, the Devialet Gold Phantom (\$2,990) came not from outer space, but from France. It was there, after 10 years of research, that Devialet's engineering team devised an analog-digital hybrid speaker. Its Class A analog amplifier is what achieves that coveted natural, analog sound. Several assisting Class D digital amplifiers provide extra power, which lets the analog amp focus on what it's supposed to be doing—giving you the most detailed, distortion-free music possible.

Devialet calls its system ADH (analog digital hybrid), and the Phantom is equipped with many more fancy-sounding acronyms. Take, for example, its HBI technology. That stands

for Heart Bass Implosion and refers to its feisty, side-loaded subwoofers designed to deliver seismic bass as they visibly pump in and out of the unit, throbbing like a mechanical heart.

As for the rounded, space-pod shape, it has its own acronym too. The ACE, or Active Cospherical Engine, operates on the premise that music fills a room in concentric acoustic ripples, so the sphere shapes the sound.

There are, of course, more technical acronyms, but here are some specs instead: Encased in an ABS plastic shell, the 4,500-watt Gold Phantom stands about 10 inches high and weighs 25 pounds. It contains two aluminum subwoofers, one aluminum midrange and a titanium tweeter, all of which combine for a frequency response of 14 Hz to 27 kHz. Set-up is easy, requiring only one app to download and a power cord to plug in.

It probably goes without saying that connectivity isn't an issue. The Gold Phantom supports most music streaming services and easily plays music from your phone, tablet or computer—even directly from your CD player, assuming you want to go retro. And if one speaker isn't enough, you can add another for vibrant stereo imaging almost guaranteed to put your senses into a state of future shock.

Visit devialet.com.

—Gregory Mottola

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The Ocean House, Watch Hill, Rhode Island

On the southernmost point of Rhode Island, on a peninsula jutting into the Atlantic, is the town of Watch Hill. Perched on a bluff, high above a gorgeous beach, sits the Ocean House.

It's a spectacular building, more than 146 feet tall, massive and dominant as you pull around the bend, with a look straight from the Victorian Age. Grand buildings of this sort once dotted the Rhode Island Coast, and the original Ocean House welcomed its first guests in 1868. It fell into disrepair, and was closed in 2003, with plans to replace it. The new Ocean House—created to replicate the original design, with all 247 windows in their original positions and some 5,000 artifacts salvaged from the original—opened in 2010, and in 2012 joined Relais & Châteaux. While the outside retains the look of the old, the rooms inside are modern and far larger. This 152,000-square-foot facility contains a mere 49 rooms and 18 suites. Most have water views.

The shore calls to you here, and the long walk down to the beach below is well worth the journey. The hotel has 650 feet of white sand beach, with comfortable chairs, cabanas and attentive service to bring you a cocktail or glass of rosé while you sit and admire the waves. Other activities abound, as the hotel has a putting green, cooking lessons, yoga, squash

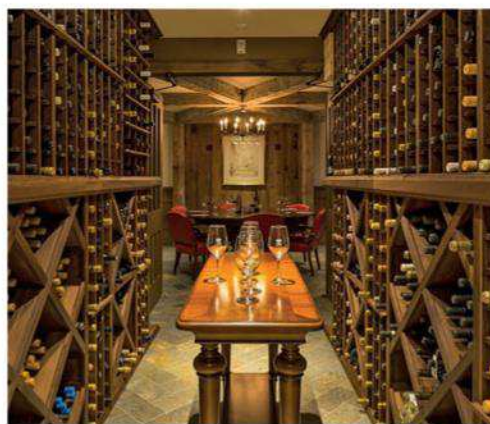
courts, an indoor saltwater pool and a vast grass croquet lawn, complete with an expert to give you a lesson. There's also a four-car fleet of Mercedes-Benz vehicles available for complimentary drives, whether for a short trip to the quaint town (complete with a working, historic carousel that dates back to the late 1800s) or a longer trip to the mansions of Newport.

The dining options here are considerable, from the upscale Coast, which has a prix-fixe menu, to the mid-level Bistro (with steaks and pastas) and the more laid back Verandah on the covered porch, overlooking the croquet court. You can also dine by the beach or indulge in 24-hour room service. Aside from the restaurants, this is a gratuity-free property.

You're likely to see many guests take their cigars (along with a libation) to one of several smoke-friendly porches at the resort, such as the long, covered porch off the Harbour Room. And when the sun is setting, the evening's plans firming up in your mind, it's hard to find a more sublime place on earth than the Ocean House's spacious front porch, cigar in hand, rocking chair under you, watching the clouds of your robusto wafting to the sky as you remember the day.

Visit oceanhouseri.com.

—David Savona





Alfa Romeo Stelvio Quadrifoglio

In a world of plain vanilla sport-utility vehicles, the Alfa Romeo Stelvio is a tasty serving of stracciatella. As it shares the underpinnings of the automaker's Giulia sedan, the Italian maker's first SUV is one of the rare examples in the category that puts the accent on the word, "sport." It takes but a few laps on the Circuit of the Americas, the serpentine Formula One track outside of Austin, Texas, to realize this Italian beauty has more than just good looks.

With its 2.9-liter twin-turbo V-6 punching out a blistering 505 horsepower, we blast out of COTA's Turn 20 and push close to its top speed of 176 mph. The reason it takes almost as long to say the name as it does to go from 0 to 60 (3.6 seconds) has to do with history. Stelvio is a most famously treacherous pass through the Italian Alps. (On another day, we'll be learning the new ute is as sure-footed as a mountain goat, which enhances our confidence behind the wheel.) As for its last name, take a closer look at the front fenders and you'll see a *quadrifoglio*, or four-leaf clover. Back in the 1920s, Alfa was a dominant racing force, but Ugo Sivocci, the team's fourth driver, was a consistent also-ran—until his mechanic adorned his car with a green quadrifoglio painted atop a white square. Sivocci won that race and another and another.

But in 1923, while testing a new car without his lucky charm, he crashed and died. Ever since, all Alfa race cars—along with its fastest street models—bear a quadrifoglio in a triangle, rather than a square, to honor the missing driver.

Our own Quadrifoglio is equipped with some of today's most advanced safety features, including blindspot detection as well as forward collision warning with auto-braking, though you can also shut off most of these "nanny systems" if you're pushing the extremes on a track like COTA.

When not pushed to the limits, the Stelvio is a comfort to drive. Despite a relatively compact footprint, it is surprisingly roomy inside, with a distinct flair to the cabin. Both elegant and uncluttered, it has leather, wood and metal accents reminiscent of chic Italian furniture. It not only looks good, but has a delightful, tactile feel. And the 12-way driver's seat will keep you firmly in place, even on the 58-turn Stelvio Pass.

At a starting price of \$79,995, the Stelvio Quadrifoglio isn't cheap, but in this SUV's case your paying for the sport as well as the utility.

Visit alfaromeousa.com.

—Paul A. Eisenstein

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The cast of the original *Magnificent Seven*. You don't have to be McQueen or Bronson to rock a cowboy hat, but it helps.

The Cowboy Hat

During his Oscar-nominated performance in *Murphy's Romance*, James Garner mentors two younger patrons in an Arizona general store concerning cowboy hats. "It doesn't matter how you bend it. It's how you wear it," he explains. Worn on the back of the head means you like people. Tipped on the side, you're a rooster looking for a young lady or a fight. Worn square and down on the forehead says, "Get off the sidewalk and clear a path, 'cuz you're cocked and ready to fire."

According to Heather Harding, of AzTex Hat Co. in Scottsdale, he should have added a few other qualities, such as the style of hat (the cowboy genre comprises many) and where it will be worn (they are seen everywhere from golf courses to boardrooms now) as well as your size, height and shape. AzTex has been putting real cowpokes and would-be wranglers together with hats for the past 35 years.

Fashions have changed over the years, but the traditional shape is the rancher, a wide-brim hat with a creased crown. Another perennial is what Harding calls a wind cutter, synonymous with John Wayne and *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*. It has a pinched crown and comes to a teardrop point in front. The J.R. Ewing/Charlie Daniels look, with a high-rise façade, has fallen out of favor, especially when paired with an exaggerated band decoration. An emerging style is the gambler, a short crown hat, popularized by Denzel Washington in the remake of *The*

Magnificent Seven. AzTex carries a range of looks you'll likely find familiar, both from brands like Stetson and Resistol and their own custom creation, which can be ordered from scratch.

Once you decide what cowboy you want to emulate, think about what you'll look like when you put it on your head. A lot of that depends on your height, size and head shape, says Harding. A general rule is big man/wide brim and vice versa. AzTex will walk you through the niceties. "Pick up the phone and call," she says. "We don't want to put people in more hat than they can wear."

While AzTex hats are popular with urban cowboys, they are durable enough for riding the range. Even with mishaps, says Harding, like being poked by a low-hanging mesquite, "They just wear." Which is part of the charm. The hat maker will even distress new hats to make them look worn. After all, she adds, some customers "don't want to look like they're walking out in a brand new hat." Even so, Harding suggests bringing your hat back to be cleaned and refurbished occasionally—every 20 to 30 years.

Their highest grade hat is made from waterproof fur felt and can run as high as a thousand dollars, but you can economize with wool felt or even go less expensive with a straw hat, popular with golfers. Whatever you decide, best tip it back on your head.

Visit aztexhats.com, resistol.com and stetson.com.

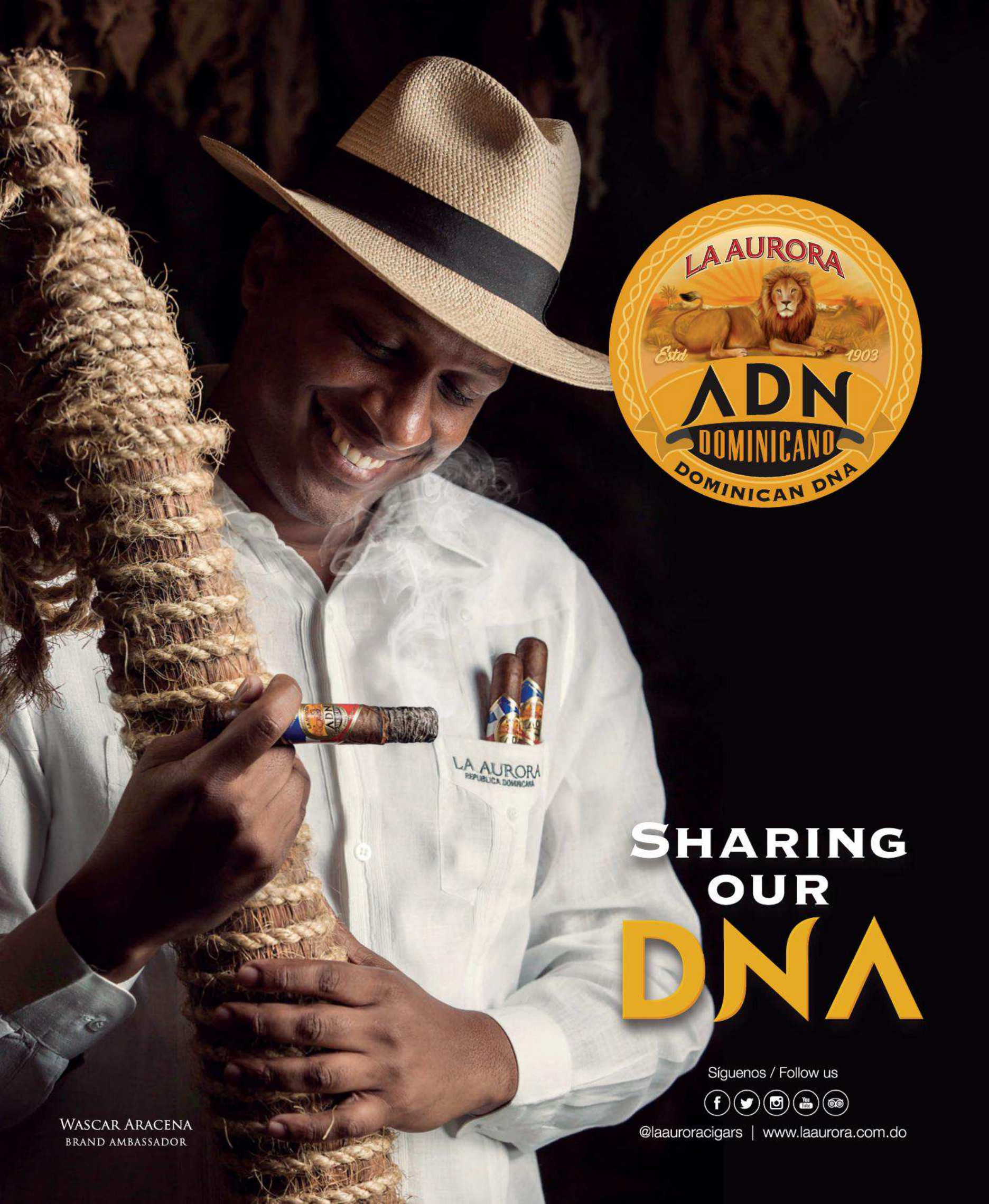
—Jack Bettridge




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Kalamazoo Gaucho Grill

Forget for a moment the taste of barbecue—sweet smoke and savory meat—and consider the other reason making it is so satisfying: cooking outdoors with fire is a primal urge that isn't fulfilled by ovens. If full-on primitive isn't your style either, consider such new culture as the Kalamazoo Gaucho Grill.

This gleaming unit combines aboriginal technique, modern technology and a bit of steampunk—and is bound to make you the subject of grill envy. Also called a Santa Maria grill, it burns wood fired by gas and has a cooking surface that moves up and down to adjust heat. It lights effortlessly. You put your meal on the rack (optional surfaces include the Argentinean v-shaped grate) and set the distance from the flame with the huge wheel on the side. Smoke meat at the highest level. Sear it below. Built-in or free-standing, the Gaucho includes a chain-driven rotisserie that also travels up and down. If the heavy-duty, 304 stainless steel isn't tough enough you can upgrade to marine grade.

This smoking method differs from most barbecue in that it is open air (not smoked in an enclosed box). You don't get the same intense smoke flavors, but you get more interaction with fire. Both Argentina and California's Santa Maria Valley are both known for this style of cooking, but it's inspired by age-old, open-pit cooking. The California movement is most associated with tri-tip steaks, a cut that traditionally was used for hamburger. This falls into the great barbecue tradition of transforming cheaper cuts into works of culinary art. If Kalamazoo's price tag (\$20,795 to \$27,295 as shown) doesn't seem to fit into that same economical culinary aesthetic, a range of cookers featuring moving grates are available. You may even be able to retrofit your present grill with that equipment. And you'll still get the joy of playing with fire.

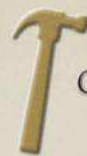
Visit kalamazoogourmet.com.

—Jack Bettridge





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The Ice Cube Cometh

The legendary Wild West law officer, gambler and sports columnist Bat Masterson once spoofed the Pollyannaish notion that things always break even in life, saying, “We all get the same amount of ice. The rich get it in the summertime and the poor get it in the winter.” You’d think modern refrigeration would have ended that class distinction, but today’s cocktail set confers a new type of ice status. It’s not defined by having ice in the summer, but by having the *right kind*.

The formula hasn’t changed, but the form has. It used to be you settled for whatever ice solidified in your freezer trays, spit out of your icemaker or came in the bags that the gas station sold. The problem with that is that cocktails call for different sizes and shapes. A drink that should be nursed from an Old Fashioned glass is best served with large format ice that will melt slowly, allowing you to nurse it. A Highball (whiskey and soda), which goes down quicker, can take a cube small enough to fit the narrow glass, but large enough that it won’t quickly dilute the drink. Ice used in a shaker should be

a bit smaller to quickly chill the contents. On the other end of the spectrum is crushed ice. Often avoided, it makes perfect sense in a Mint Julep, a drink made almost purely of whiskey.

Happily, the ice-tray biz has kept up with the times, making forms from food-grade rubber that cover most any drink. As well as large-format trays intended for rocks glasses (cubes shown were made in Cocktail Kingdom’s square-cube tray, \$7.99, and the Ice Ball 2.5, set of two for \$24.95), they come in long prism-shaped molds intended for Tom Collins glasses. Sorry crushed icers, you’ll need a blender or have to go to work with a hammer—like Cocktail Kingdom’s Schmallet (shown, \$15.99).

Of course, the true drinks artisan carefully shapes his cubes by hand (a time-honored tradition in Japan). For that you’ll need tongs and the Anvil Ice Pick (both Cocktail Kingdom, \$11.99 and \$19.99). But remember: work fast, your art is melting.

Visit cocktailkingdom.com and amazon.com.

—Jack Bettridge



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Green Watches

Green is the new blue in watches for those who want to stand apart from the crowd. This year's most stylish sport watches are outfitted with green dials or bands in various shades and styles spanning the gamut from retro to contemporary to downright futuristic.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Chopard's sponsorship of the Mille Miglia classic car race that traverses Italy from Brescia to Rome and back, covering about 1,000 miles, hence the name. Chopard marks the milestone with a colorful collection of 42-mm steel chronographs featuring glossy, vintage-inspired dials that pay tribute to countries that raced under designated colors. Gear-head Anglophiles will be drawn to the British Green version (\$6,080, bottom right) in a rich green shade that was established as Britain's official racing color more than a century ago.

For something sleek and contemporary, Hublot's Classic Fusion Titanium Green Chronograph (\$10,800, top left) looks fresh with a radiant satin-finished sunray dial, which color shifts from olive to deep forest, and a matching green alligator strap lined with rubber. Available in titanium or the brand's proprietary King Gold alloy, the 45-mm case mixes satin and polished finishes for a refined aesthetic. It's also available on a time-only model in four sizes.



Always on the cutting edge, Richard Mille has a green version of the RM 67-02 (\$131,500, top right) that pays tribute to South African sprinter Wayde Van Niekerk, who is putting the watch through his paces on the track. The special edition is one of a series of models honoring elite athletes in the colors of their countries, with a hand-painted rendition of each flag across the dial.

The automatic skeletonized CRMA7 movement features grade-5 titanium baseplate and bridges and a variable-geometry winding rotor made of white gold and Carbon TPT. The highly resilient case combines superlight Carbon TPT and has colorful, striated Quartz TPT composites that are used in auto racing. Weighing in at a mere 32 grams including its special elastic strap, the RM 67-02 is the lightest automatic in the Mille lineup, so it won't slow you down on road or track.

Visit chopard.com, hublot.com, richardmille.com.

—Laurie Kahle

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Mavros Ashtrays

Most cigar ashtrays are rather simple things. There's no shortage of squares, circles and ovals made from various materials that can gather your ashes. But if you want to take a walk on the wild side—ashtray-wise *and* zoologically—then consider the works of cigar-smoking silversmith Patrick Mavros, who takes inspiration from the animals of his native Zimbabwe. His repertoire includes five quite distinctive ashtrays, each done in sterling silver. The crocodile and monkey ashtray (pictured, £1,295, or about \$1,500) depicts two of Africa's most famous wild animals. A crocodile, tail coiled, serves as a seat for an unperturbed monkey, whose head in turn supports a silver platter, meant to hold a cigar. Adding to the monkey's charm (and remarkable sense of calm

considering its riding atop one of the world's most deadly creatures) is that it is smoking an 18-karat gold cigar. The ashtray stands 2 1/2 inches tall, and 5 1/2 inches wide at its fattest points.

Mavros makes ashtrays, cuff links, belt buckles, studs, jewelry and many other silver items in Zimbabwe on Mpata Farm. The 1,500-acre compound serves as a wildlife sanctuary and apparently as an inspiration to Mavros. His other larger models feature elephants, camels and lions, and are priced accordingly. While these pieces mightn't be for everybody, they'll certainly put some wildlife in your smoking room.

Visit www.patrickmavros.com.

—David Savona

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Golf Sunglasses

Remember those oversized blue lenses that were supposed to help you look for lost golf balls, but made you look like the course nerd instead? Thankfully, they've gone the way of the wooden driver, replaced by links-specific sunglasses meant to actually help improve your game, even while preserving your sense of style.

For instance, Under Armour's UA Tuned Golf Lenses are designed specifically to enhance your ability to read greens, gauge distance and identify terrain nuances. The lenses are tinted—but not darkened—with a light-filtration profile that enhances vision in both sunny and shaded areas. Under Armour considered each potential shot, so the lenses are versatile enough to be worn throughout your round. You get all of the protection you need when teeing off into the sun, but won't have to remove your glasses to evaluate the distance of an approach shot in the shade. The lenses are fitted into Under Armour's Assist frames (\$99, at bottom), which resemble Ray-Ban's classic Wayfarer, but are made with lightweight and durable high-grade polyamide frames for functionality. Over a long day of golf, the Assist rests comfortably on the nose and above the ear without restricting or slipping with perspiration. Afterwards, you can switch into the UA Tuned Recovery Glimpse (\$110, second from bottom), with blue-tinted lenses for a restorative effect.

Run-of-the-mill shades block only low-energy UV-A rays. Oakley's Targetline (\$153, second from top) filters out UV-B, the medium-wave rays that cause short-term eye sensitivity and impair your game. The frames, made from a nylon-infused plastic that Oakley calls O-Matter, are created to be strong yet flexible and stay comfortable for longer periods of time. For the nose bridge, Oakley uses what it calls Unobtainium, a material also used on motorcycle handlebar grips for its ability to retain friction when wet.

Roka's new Halsey performance sunglasses (\$170, top), founded in 2013, places a variety of high-performance lenses inside fashionable lifestyle frames. Each model is designed for a specific sport, while the lens options cater to particular light conditions. For golf, we recommend the high-contrast, dark-bronze mirror lenses for bright to variably sunny conditions. These lenses come in a dark tortoise-shell frame that complements casual evening wear just as much as they do the modern golf getup. Wear them on the course, and afterwards on the patio with your post-round cigar.

Visit underarmour.com, oakley.com, roka.com.

—Blake Droesch





Urban Ax Throwing

Looking for a novel date night? How about ax throwing? You heard that right. A new Brooklyn club called Kick Axe Throwing is dedicated to the sport—if you can call it that—a pastime popular enough that locations are coming to Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Orlando, Los Angeles and Seattle. And, with children as young as eight allowed to throw, it seems only a matter of time until it becomes a venue for kids birthday parties.

Think of it as darts with hatchets—and booze. The club provides ax throwing ranges—cages might be more accurate—with two large wooden bullseyes per range. For \$35 a 75-minute session (beer and wine is extra) you and your friends can work out your primal need to throw sharp objects at defenseless targets.

Groups of eight or more get their own range. Our party of three threw with two couples we didn't know in advance. But throwing axes has a way of developing community quickly and there was an unmistakable “bro-y” vibe to the festivities. Which is not to say that women don't get into the ax-throwing spirit. There were plenty the night we went.

A session goes something like this: You're divided into teams and asked to come up with names. We chose “Splitting Hairs,” our opponents, “Axcellent.” We also thought of “Axcident” but that might have been cutting too close to the bone. Two players are invited onto the range where your “axpert” gives you a quick tutorial

on ax throwing. Feet planted, you grip the ax firmly with two hands, raise your arms over and behind your head, aim and throw. There are several fun games, but it's challenging enough just to get the weapon to stick to the wall—and not the ceiling. It's all about technique rather than strength.

Because beer and axes sound like a recipe for disaster, the axperts take safety seriously. They reserve the right to stop you from throwing if you seem intoxicated or throwing in an unsafe manner. Additional precautions include no open-toed shoes, only entering the range when invited, never handing off an ax (each range comes with its own rustic stump where you're supposed to place the supplied tool after your turn) and—who needs to be told this?—never trying to catch an ax.

Once we felt comfortable enough throwing our axes—comfort is a relative term when it comes to wielding an implement sometimes used as a plot device in horror films—our axpert showed us how to toss with one hand. But he demurred on showing us how to throw behind our backs—as he has mastered.

While I'd be lying if I said I felt more accomplished by the end of our session, some satisfaction came in removing ax throwing from my bucket list.

Visit kickaxe.com.

—Ralph Gardner Jr.



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*It's hard not to smile when you're
Matthew McConaughey, who has an
Oscar, a new Bourbon and three films
heading to theaters this year.*

Alright, Alright, Alright

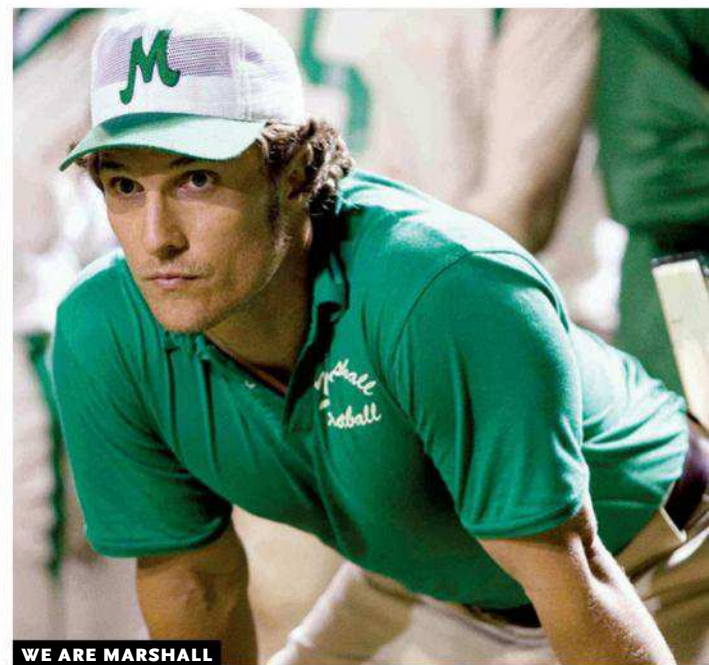
by Marshall Fine *portraits by John Russo*

styling: Tara Swennen for The Wall Group

grooming: Kara Yoshimoto Bua for Starworks Artists

photographed at The Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, Los Angeles





To the outside observer, Matthew McConaughey's career underwent a serious course correction seven years ago. It was 2011, and they called it the "McConaissance." It was a much-vaunted, media-invented comeback narrative crafted around the actor, who had spent the 2000s seemingly adrift in a sea of light but successful romantic comedies, popcorn films that didn't match the promise he had shown in his earlier years.

But with a return to drama in hits such as *The Lincoln Lawyer*, *Bernie* and *Killer Joe*, McConaughey reclaimed his leading-man luster, culminating in the acclaim for his performances in *Mud* and *The Paperboy*. Even as the drums were beating about his haunting work as a fire-eyed, driven lawmaker in the HBO series "True Detective," he was winning an Oscar, the ultimate comeback accessory, for his unforgettable starring performance in 2013's *Dallas Buyers Club*.

That's from the outside, looking in.

McConaughey is sitting on a makeshift stage in the outdoor beer garden of Contigo, an Austin, Texas, restaurant, on a sunny April afternoon. He sports a three-day beard and the tanned look of someone who spends a lot of time outdoors with his kids. For McConaughey, that comeback story feels like a stretch. If you ask him, he'll tell you he never went away.

"That whole thing was much less of a 180 for myself than people seemed to think," McConaughey says, relaxing in a low-back armchair. "There was this narrative of 'then' and 'now.' But for those previous few years, I never worked harder than I had. I didn't get a new acting coach or take a new class. I just said, 'Fuck

the bucks—I'm going for the experience' in the things I was choosing. And really, part of what worked for me is that I had fewer expectations about my career at that point. I quit trying to project how something would be received and decided to just be an actor for hire again. So I shut down my production company and my music company and simplified the things on my proverbial desk. I love being an actor and going as deep as you can in a role, to really commit to the craft. I put my head down and went after roles that scared me."

The 48-year-old McConaughey has a full head of wavy walnut-brown hair with glints of gold. Tall and lean, wearing a gray workshirt and a pair of jeans over square-toed boots, he's got ramrod posture and an easy smile. The milestone of 50 approaches, but McConaughey is unconcerned: "I'm not a numbers guy," he says. "I figure I'm in the eighth fairway and I'm hitting my second shot, with 18 holes in this particular fairy tale."

"He gets more and more interesting the older he gets," says director Yann Demange, who cast McConaughey in *White Boy Rick*, which will arrive in theaters in September. "In the past eight years, he's been extremely brave in his choices. He had a whole previous career—and then he pressed 'Stop' and went, 'Fuck that.' He talked to me about consciously wanting to try something different."

As he talks, McConaughey is waiting to speak at an event before a group of Texas liquor distributors, to help launch Wild Turkey Longbranch, a new blend of Bourbon the actor helped to create.

More than just a celebrity spokesman, McConaughey is the creative director for Wild Turkey, a position he's held since 2016.

LEFT: COLLECTION CHRISTOPHER / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; RIGHT: AF ARCHIVE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; PREVIOUS SPREAD: SUIT BY ETRO; SHOES BY CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN; POCKET SQUARE BY DOLCE; SHIRT BY TODD SNYDER; WATCH BY TIFFANY



AMISTAD



THE WOLF OF WALL STREET



DALLAS BUYERS CLUB

Initially approached by the brand to be its famous face, McConaughey countered with his vision of how to introduce the label to a generation of millennials who were just discovering the possibilities of Bourbon. He wrote and directed a pair of short films for the brand, and collaborated with master distiller Eddie Russell in a two-year process to create Longbranch, which hit the American market in May.

“They came to me about four years ago because they were interested in me being the face of the brand,” McConaughey says. “I wasn’t sure about that, but I kept sharing ideas with them about where the brand was going. I finally spent a couple of days in Kentucky with them and I was intrigued by this iconic family story—because, really, it’s an iconic American family tradition and Bourbon is an American invention. I was keen on introducing it to a younger generation, to show that Bourbon isn’t just for 60-year-old guys sitting on their back porch as the sun goes down, looking back on their day.”

McConaughey hasn’t had much time for sitting on the back porch of late. Along with launching the new brand, McConaughey

shot three films in the past year, all of which will come out later in 2018: *White Boy Rick*, a drama based on a true story; *Serenity*, a thriller opposite Anne Hathaway; and the raucous comedy, *The Beach Bum*.

McConaughey finds himself most drawn to roles that “give me butterflies, that scare me right away.” Since winning his Oscar, he has taken on roles in films with blockbuster budgets (*The Dark Tower*, *Interstellar*), but has shied away from the kind of glossy star vehicles that dominated his resume in the first decade of this century. That’s to take nothing away from the success of films like

“I love being an actor and going as deep as you can in a role, to really commit to the craft. I put my head down and went after roles that scared me.”

How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days. “I still get residual checks from that movie,” says comedian Robert Klein, who played McConaughey’s boss in the 2003 film.

In going back to his independent roots on films such as *Mud* and *Dallas Buyers Club*, McConaughey reconnected with the energy and excitement that drew him to the process of making movies in the first place.



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"You work faster and move quickly," he says happily. "There's no sitting around while they set up a shot for two or three hours. When I was making *Killer Joe* with William Friedkin, he did everything in one take. One take! Now there are two ways to take that. You can freeze up and think, 'What am I gonna do?' Or you just relax and use that as freedom, instead of fear."

The pressure on *Dallas Buyers Club* was similar: "When we were doing screenings of the film and talking afterward, I'd always get a gasp from the audience when I told them we shot it for \$4.9 million in 25 days."

McConaughey won the Oscar playing an unlikely—but real-life—HIV activist. When Texan Ron Woodroof is diagnosed with HIV in the mid-1980s, he creates a network to smuggle in treatments used outside of the United States. He sues the FDA and ultimately gets legal access to the drugs that would stretch his life expectancy by seven years.

McConaughey was coming off *Magic Mike*, in which he played a male stripper, and radically changed his physique to play the gaunt Woodroof. "I got in great physical shape for *Magic Mike*. Then I started losing weight and not working out. I did that through the filming of *Mud*, and, in five months, I lost 47 pounds for *Dallas Buyers Club*."

He knew the script was a good one "but I didn't foresee the work translating on the level that it did. I mean, you can look at *Dallas Buyers Club* and think, well, done right, this could be a 'fall release.' But really, I'd say, let's just call it a good drama. What I like about drama is that you don't have to act as much. They're closer to you. You just have to ask, 'What is the reality here? How can I tell the truth about this human behavior?' Drama gives an actor license to go as high or as low as he wants. The ceiling—and the basement—are more personal in a drama."

A veteran of more than two decades in Hollywood, McConaughey navigated the sometimes tricky currents of Oscar campaign season, he says, because the movie and performance spoke for themselves.

"I watched the finished film and thought, 'I'd shake hands with that,'" he says. "When I watch myself onscreen, if I see myself too much, I think, 'What's McConaughey doing up there?' But with this one, after the first scene, I was with Ron Woodroof. I thought the performance was true."

"I didn't have to bullshit or come up with an angle because I believed we had the goods. I never felt like I had to sell you on why you should like it. People connected to it on a personal level—and told us personal stories: 'My nephew had HIV and he went through this.' That's when art translates, when you know it's resonated with someone's life."

Winning the Oscar for that role meant "higher confidence and better choices in scripts," McConaughey says. "It's given me a larger, more qualitative platform. Making movies is still my favorite part of this. I like making them way better than watching



them. It's the magic, the 'Oh, what this could be' of it, that turns me on."

That was certainly the case with "True Detective," the critically acclaimed HBO series. McConaughey costarred with Woody Harrelson in the 2014 debut season (the second season, which aired in 2015, featured an entirely different cast and storyline) and both nabbed Emmy nominations for best actor in a drama series. The moody, unnerving tale of a murder investigation in rural Louisiana hit McConaughey as hard as it did the rest of the viewing public.

"That was like shooting a movie with a 450-page script—I never knew how they were going to edit it to tell the story," he says. "So I was watching it every Sunday, one episode at a time, the

Talking Bourbon with
Jimmy and Eddie Russell.



The Bourbon Project

Matthew McConaughey has been the creative director for Wild Turkey Bourbon since 2016. His first short film for the brand debuted that year, and now his greatest project has gone on sale: the new straight Bourbon brand Longbranch. McConaughey worked with Wild Turkey master distiller Eddie Russell on its creation. “As a lover of Bourbon,” McConaughey says in a video for the brand, “I’ve always wanted to create my favorite Bourbon.” The signatures of both men appear on the bottle, which is somewhat Spartan in design, with a smaller label, better to show off the amber liquid inside. Longbranch is an eight-year-old Bourbon

refined with mesquite and oak charcoals. The mesquite is a nod to the heritage of McConaughey, who was born in Uvalde, Texas, and today lives in Austin. Longbranch went on sale around the United States in May, and retails for just under \$40.



same as everybody else. I was as excited as anybody else to put the kids to bed and watch the latest episode every Sunday night. I was having the same water-cooler talk on Monday morning. I’m glad I got to watch it that way; I was wowed like everybody else.”

The list of high-profile directors he’s worked with is impressive, from Steven Spielberg (*Amistad*), to Ron Howard (*edTV*), Steven Soderbergh (*Magic Mike*) and Christopher Nolan (*Interstellar*.) He even worked with Martin Scorsese on *The Wolf of Wall Street*, in a brief but memorable appearance as a chanting, chest-thumping, coke sniffing boss who sits down to lunch and asks his waiter to bring him and his new hire Leonardo DiCaprio rounds of dry Martinis until one of them passes out.

“Marty has an incredible sense of humor—and he loves music,” says McConaughey. “So we were communicating in almost musical terms. It wasn’t even English.”

Speaking in musical terms comes naturally to McConaughey. Whether discussing rhythm, tone or taste, he’s likely to reach for a piece of musical vocabulary to express how he feels. Asked about the intersection of Bourbon and cigars, for example, McConaughey says, “They’re two bass lines—and bass is my favorite instrument. It’s this earthy, sophisticated, very outdoorsy combination: Bourbon and a cigar.”

These days, McConaughey tends to enjoy most of his cigars while he’s on the golf course. He likes a medium-sized Romeo y Julieta, but found himself smoking larger, maduro-wrapped cigars for the upcoming *The Beach Bum*, mirroring the film’s director, Harmony Korine.

“I would partake of his—and I wound up smoking them onscreen,” McConaughey says. “I got a real taste for them when we were filming in Miami.”

The last time he spoke to CIGAR AFICIONADO (McConaughey was on the cover in April 2011), he mentioned liking the idea of holding on to a cigar to let it mature in a humidor. “I love the lineage of that, the patience to say, ‘Ah, this will mature.’”

Time, he says now, figures heavily into his enjoyment of good cigars, which he typically does while sipping Bourbon or Port: “There’s a ritual about smoking a cigar that slows my clock down. I’m a busy guy—so I like the chance to slow that clock down.”

Part of that effort includes moving his family to Austin, the Texas state capital and home to his alma mater, the University of Texas, about 160 miles from his hometown of Uvalde. With its thriving economy, burgeoning tech sector and Sun Belt climate, Austin is the 11th-largest city in America and one of the fastest-growing, with both strivers and retirees causing the population to mushroom.

To McConaughey, the big city still has the soul of a village. The tricky part, he says, will be for it to maintain that sensibility even through current and future growing pains.

“We’ve got to remain tapped into a culture that’s very soulful,” he says. “When you get quick growth, you’ve got to be resilient to retain that culture. This city’s sort of going through its adolescence with this fast growth. But you’ve got to maintain the values of the village in a growing metropolis. I believe this place can hold on. I don’t want to be saying, ‘Oh, I remember when it was great.’ If we’re growing, we have to grow for the better. I think that’s where we’re headed. I have too many friends who are taking about half the salary they could make somewhere else just to stay here.”

He and wife Camila Alves McConaughey have two sons, nine, and five, and a daughter, eight. Making Austin his base means he’s “taking time with my kids and my wife, giving myself time to follow those 3 a.m. ideas,” he says. “I’m writing more, fundraising for my foundation (the Just Keep Livin Foundation, which funds after-school programs), getting to know my town again.”

When McConaughey last graced CIGAR AFICIONADO’s cover, he and Alves had two children but had yet to tie the knot. At that point, McConaughey said, “Marriage—it’s not something we feel we need to be complete. It doesn’t mean we won’t do it.” The pair married in June 2012. So what changed?

“I mean, the clock was ticking—I was about to be 40 and my



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“I figure I’m in the eighth fairway and I’m hitting my second shot, with 18 holes in this particular fairy tale.”

plan was to be married and have kids by that age,” he says. “But I didn’t want to play the game of starting to feel anxious because, with too much anxiety, you can’t find a mate. And then you make a hasty decision. I knew men who had made hasty decisions and women who had done the same thing. But at that point, I wasn’t hunting. And then this amazing woman walked across my field of vision and I thought, Who is that? And it was Camila.”

Fatherhood has been a discovery. Kids “are who they are, right from the start,” he says. “You can shepherd them, nudge them into position to be themselves. But each month they’re more who they are than ever.” His children have yet to see his face onscreen, for they’ve only been allowed to see two of their dad’s movies, the animated films for which he provided character voices: 2016’s *Kubo and the Two Strings* and *Sing*. The rest of the filmography will have to wait.

Back at the Bourbon event in Austin, McConaughey is walking around, mingling comfortably with several dozen liquor distributors. He and Eddie Russell have concluded a presentation explaining the origin of Wild Turkey Longbranch. The pair chatted about the process of refining the blend, how they hit on the idea of adding mesquite charcoal to give a Texas twang to the distinctive Kentucky whiskey, and what particular time it was when McConaughey called Russell with great enthusiasm, to wake him up after tasting what became the ultimate blend.

“I think I called him at 2 a.m.,” McConaughey starts, to which the laconic Russell puts it, “It was more like 4.”

Russell also notes that the actor had considerable influence on the blend’s bottle design. The discrete label takes up less than a third of the Longbranch bottle’s distinctive geometric front and features both McConaughey’s and Russell’s signatures, above raised-glass lettering.

“I didn’t want a big-ass label,” McConaughey says. “And I wanted it to have shoulders and hips—like a great car or a beautiful woman.”

After the presentation, McConaughey works the crowd, just another Texan with an appreciation for strong brown liquor, although one with whom everyone in attendance wants their picture taken.

“I dealt with him quite a lot during the process and it was a fun ride for me,” Russell says. “I was surprised at how down-to-earth

he is. You think about how a big movie star will be but he was just a big family man. And that’s what it’s about for us at Wild Turkey.

“He’s a real authentic guy. He took his own path, which is something Jimmy (Russell, Eddie’s 83-year-old father, still a Wild Turkey master distiller) always did. It’s a big company, but it’s still a very family-type business.”

McConaughey’s distinctive voice and phrasing made his ads for Lincoln automobiles stand out, as they do with the films he’s created for Wild Turkey. And he recently added another brand to the lineup.

“I just signed an endorsement deal with Carl’s Jr. because I love beef,” he says with a smile. “So I’ve got Carl’s Jr., Lincoln and Wild

Turkey Longbranch: beef, Bourbon and cars,” he says, referring to the long American heritage that unites the three products. “They’re three things I really like,” he says.

McConaughey walks through life with the sort of ease that comes with being comfortable in your own skin. Notes Demange, “He’s grounded, as a family man with three kids. Most good actors have the comfort—but some of that can be arrogance. Matthew still wants to learn and grow. He’s still open to having experiences. He can still discover—and, as a result, we discover different sides of him.”

That comfort includes a sense of self-awareness—as well as a distinct ability to articulate his introspection into his own motivation and drive.

“I work everyday to do my best to know who the heck I am,” he says. “I’m not going to walk out the door and try to be anybody else. I’m not one of those guys where you’re going to uncover some Pandora’s box of who I really was. That’s what ‘just keep livin’

means. I’ve got the right to be me and, as a citizen of the world, to live my life. That was inherent to me long before I was famous. I’m still living my life and am going to be myself. I owe that to myself—and to my family and my father and my lineage.

“I’m not saying that as a pride thing. But it’s a right I pay a lot of respect to. You’ve got to watch in life who’s wagging who—is the dog wagging the tail or the tail wagging the dog? I’ve noticed the tail wagging me from time to time and I have to say, Hold on—I want to be the one doing the wagging.” ♦

Contributing editor Marshall Fine is critic-in-residence at The Picture House Regional Film Center in Pelham, NY.



On the night of his life, March 2, 2014, holding his Oscar for Best Actor.

LA GRAN OFERTA

LA GRAN OFERTA

My Father
LA GRAN OFERTA

LA GRAN OFERTA

MY FATHER CIGARS

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Hand

MY FATHER



MY FATHER
CIGARS

Don Pepín García
FAMILY



My Father
LA GRAN OFERTA



Watch,

Don't

Tell

The most famous mistaken drop in Masters history, made by Tiger Woods in 2013, was caught by an eagle-eyed TV viewer.

The lords of golf have put an end to the long-standing policy of allowing viewers to report rules violations

BY JEFF WILLIAMS



On a perfectly pure Sunday afternoon in April of 2017, Lexi Thompson was leading the ANA Inspiration by two strokes and cruising. It was the first LPGA major of the year, and was the tour's flagship event.

Thompson won it in 2014 when it was called the Kraft Nabisco Championship, and while she had achieved superstar status, that remained her sole victory in a major event. She seemed poised to double up as she played the back nine.

As Thompson walked to the 13th tee, tour officials confronted her with some decidedly bad news. She was being penalized for incorrectly replacing her ball on the 17th green of Saturday's round, the result of a television viewer notifying the LPGA by e-mail. She was being assessed two strokes for the incorrect replacement, and another two strokes for signing an incorrect scorecard for the Saturday round.

"Are you kidding?" she replied.

No, they weren't.

She went from two shots up to two shots down. Tearing up, Thompson gamely trundled on, losing the tournament in a play-off. But the golf world was shaken by what had happened to her. For nearly four decades there had been a series of rules infractions pointed out by viewers citing a breach of the rules that led to penalties being assessed, some leading to disqualification.

Why, professional players had been asking for years, are people outside the ropes, outside the golf course or even outside the state, allowed to weigh in on rules infractions? In a sport where honesty is the only policy, where players call infractions on themselves, why do television viewers have any say at all?

As of 2018, they don't. In December of 2017, the USGA and the Royal & Ancient, in conjunction with the professional golf tours, announced that television viewer input would no longer be considered. Watch, don't tell.

A statement issued by Thomas Pagel, the USGA's senior director of rules, addressed and amended a situation that the pro players had been requesting. "The message we're putting out to fans is, What you've seen, we've seen," Pagel said. "Have confidence in us running the event. We want you to be a fan. Enjoy watching the world's best players. Let the rules be handled inside the ropes between the players and officials."

The rulers of golf announced that officials will be designated to watch the television broadcast and make rulings when deemed necessary. Those assessments are to be based on "reasonable judgment" and "naked eye" standards, and not ultra-slo-mo, hi-definition reviews. Additionally, the two-stroke penalty for signing an incorrect scorecard when the player did not know they had violated the rules was eliminated.

At least one player had been penalized by the new video review procedure by early May. Nicole Broch Larsen was penalized one shot for causing her ball to move while at rest during the second round of the LPGA's Volunteers of America Texas Classic. Broch Larsen thought she had finished at 7 under, but was told that a video review had found she caused her ball to move on the fourth hole. Instead of a birdie, the penalty gave her a par. An on-course



A sullen Lexi Thompson after losing the ANA Inspiration in a play-off. An e-mail from a viewer cost her four strokes.

rules official, after being consulted by Broch Larsen, deemed there was no penalty against her. Because she was following the direction of the official, Broch Larsen did not receive an additional penalty from playing her ball from the wrong place.

PGA rules official Slugger White summed up the television conundrum that professional golfers face. "Everybody is on TV now. They're televising 18 holes. They are scrutinized more," White says. "That's the price of success, I guess. It would have been nice to be on TV all the time. It means you're playing good and making a lot of money."

In light of these changes, CIGAR AFICIONADO is recapping 10 of the most famous television viewer incursions into the golf rules world, including one that involved the most famous player of the 21st Century.

Thompson Misses The Mark

On the 17th hole of Mission Hills Country Club in Rancho Mirage, California, Lexi Thompson was leading the ANA Inspiration Tournament on Saturday afternoon and everything was going along swimmingly. She had marked her ball before putting, but when she replaced it, a television viewer noticed that she didn't seem to place it back in front of her mark, but somewhat off to the side. Well after the round had concluded, an e-mail to the LPGA was passed along to officials.

Thompson was leading by two shots after 12 holes on Sunday. That's when she was approached by LPGA officials and told that she was being assessed four penalty strokes for her

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actions on Saturday, two strokes for not replacing the ball correctly and two strokes for signing an incorrect scorecard. She went from the lead to trailing by a stroke, and was clearly emotionally shaken.

Tiger Woods had been watching, and tweeted: “Viewers at home should not be officials wearing stripes. Let’s go, @Lexi, win this thing anyway.”

Thompson made three birdies coming in to tie So Yeon Ryu, forcing a playoff that she lost. But in the end, she likely won enough sympathy from major golf officials across the board that the input of television viewers would no longer be allowed.

Stadler’s Terrible Towel

Probably the most famous viewer intrusion of its time was Craig Stadler’s penalty and eventual disqualification from the 1987 Shearson Lehman Brothers Andy Williams Open in San Diego. Stadler had thrown in the towel, or rather, it was thrown at him.



Craig Stadler in 1995, taking out vengeance on the cypress tree that cost him \$150,000.

On the 14th hole in the Saturday round, Stadler’s wayward drive ended up in the rough under a cypress tree with low hanging branches. The only way Stadler could play any kind of shot was from his knees, trying to scythe the ball from under the branches. The area was mucky from overnight rain and he didn’t want to get his white pants messy, so he took a towel from his bag and laid it on the grass, then knelt down on it to chop at a ball that went only a few feet.

On Sunday afternoon, the opening of the television broadcast replayed the incident. That’s when several viewers called the tournament, wondering if Stadler might have violated a rule about building a stance—that is creating a favorable stance artificially. But none of this was relayed to him during the round. He made a 35-footer for birdie on the 18th hole to finish in a three-way-tie for second place—or so he thought.

“I walk off the green and [PGA Tour rules official] Glenn Tait is standing there and says, ‘Nice putt, don’t sign your card,’” Stadler says. After a discussion in the rules trailer, Stadler was penalized two strokes for the Saturday round, and since he had signed for a lower score he was disqualified. That \$37,500 check got canceled.

“That disqualification for the tree took me out of everything,” says Stadler. “I missed [the season ending Nabisco] by \$10,000 which was guaranteed money, and bonuses. It cost me about 150 grand.”

Stadler did get a measure of revenge. When the tree was dying in 1995, he was invited to help cut it down. “Gladly,” he says.

Watson’s Bad Advice

This might be the first high-profile viewer call-in that led to a very high-profile player being penalized. It was not what was seen, but what was heard. During the final round of the Tournament of Champions at La Costa in 1980, Tom Watson was playing with Lee Trevino. Watson was leading by a bunch, on cruise control. Trevino wasn’t playing up to his standard and had been grouching about it.

Then a microphone on a tee picked up Watson giving Trevino advice about his stance and ball position. Under the rules of golf, players are not allowed to give advice to other players during the round. The overarching label for this is “protecting the field.” A viewer called the La Costa Resort and the information was relayed to Tour officials. When Watson completed his round, he was told about the infraction and the ensuing two-shot penalty. He signed a scorecard for two strokes higher, but won the tournament anyway.

Streck Breaks A Branch

Two years later at the exact same tournament on the exact same course, Ron Streck ran afoul of another television viewer.

Streck was in contention on Sunday when his drive on the 16th hole ended up under a tree. The television camera was on him as he attempted to take a stance in the awkward situation, with a small twig of a branch in his face. Streck bent, then broke the twig before playing his shot. The phone rang at the resort. Apparently more than one viewer was questioning whether breaking the twig was allowed under the rules of golf. It was not. You can bend, but you can’t break.

Streck ended up with a disappointing three-putt on the 18th hole that knocked him out of a share of the lead, but it didn’t matter because Lanny Wadkins took control on the way home. Streck thought he had finished in solo second place. In the scoring trailer he was told by officials that he was being penalized two shots for the twig incident, and that penalty dropped him into a tie for second, costing him more than \$14,000.

“They made the call in the NBC trailer an hour and 10 minutes after it had happened,” Streck said then. “I think that is very unfair to me.”



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CordeValle Golf Club	San Martin, CA	8/30/18	\$950
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TPC Potomac at Avenel Farm	Potomac, MD	9/10/18	\$950
Windsong Farm Golf Club	Maple Plain, MN	9/17/18	\$550
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The Club at Carlton Woods	The Woodlands, TX	10/1/18	\$600

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Penalized For Practice

In August 2010, Juli Inkster was in contention at the LPGA's Safeway Classic in North Plains, Oregon. She was stuck with a long delay on the 10th tee during the second round with nothing much to do but wait.

After nearly a half hour, she decided to loosen up with some practice swings, but instead of simply swinging a club, she took out a training device, a donut-shaped ring that adds weight to the clubhead to stretch the muscles a bit. It was clearly a training aid.

A viewer reached the tournament and questioned the legality of such a maneuver. The LPGA officials contacted the USGA about it, but it was pretty clear—using a swing aid during play, even when not using it to make an official stroke—is a serious breach of the rules.

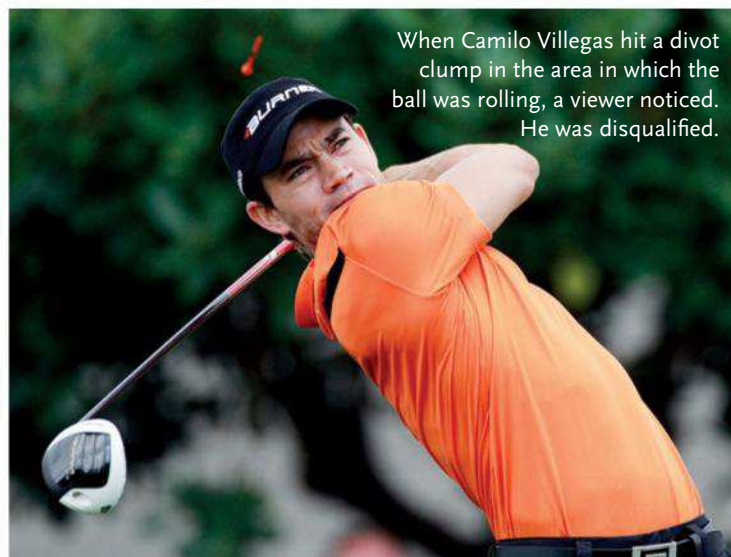
How serious? Disqualification.

Inkster was told about it right after the round, and predictably left in a huff. “It had no effect on my game whatsoever, but it is what it is,” Inkster would say in a statement issued later. “I’m very disappointed.”

Azinger's Aquatic Adventure

Paul Azinger shot a 69 in the first round of the 1991 Doral Ryder Open, after making bogey on the 18th after he had hit his tee ball into the water hazard down the left. The ball was just barely in the hazard, so Azinger decided to take off his shoes and socks and play the ball from the water, with the television camera recording the rare aquatic adventure. As he tried to get a solid stance, he moved a piece of coral with his foot. He managed to smash the ball out a few yards, eliminating the need for a penalty drop.

A television viewer saw it and the next day managed to reach rules officials to report the incident, saying that Azinger had



When Camilo Villegas hit a divot clump in the area in which the ball was rolling, a viewer noticed. He was disqualified.

Camilo's Moving Violation

Camilo Villegas had missed the 15th green on the Plantation Course at Kapalua during the first round of the 2011 Tournament of Champions. It was down a slippery slope and required a delicate pitch to get the ball up the bank and anywhere close to the hole.

Villegas' first effort didn't reach the green surface and rolled back down the hill. His second attempt did the same thing, though this time—as the ball was still moving—Villegas used his wedge to swat away a morsel of divot clump. A viewer placed a phone call to Maui to report that Villegas had broken a rule. And so he had.

When the ball is in motion, you cannot remove any loose impediment that might influence the ball's movement and final resting place. It was clearly moving toward the detritus of Villegas' divot.

Villegas had finished his round and signed his scorecard

when he was informed the next day of the penalty, which led to automatic disqualification at the time.

“If somebody called something in, I probably did something wrong,” he said with a shrug on that Friday, which was his birthday.

The Sands Of Stacy Lewis

At the LPGA Founders Cup in 2013, Stacy Lewis was humming along nicely in contention on Saturday when she drove a ball into a fairway bunker on the 16th hole. She and her caddie Travis Wilson were standing in the bunker contemplating the shot. A Golf

Channel viewer thought that Wilson had moved his foot deliberately in the sand and contacted the tournament. The question was if Wilson was testing the sand, which would be a penalty.

When Lewis walked off the 18th green after making a birdie, she thought she had shot 66. But LPGA officials were there to report that there might be an infraction and she and her caddie were asked to come to the scoring trailer to review footage of the situation in the bunker on 16.

The video was slowed down and she could see Wilson's foot move and hear the crunch of the sand. At the time, their



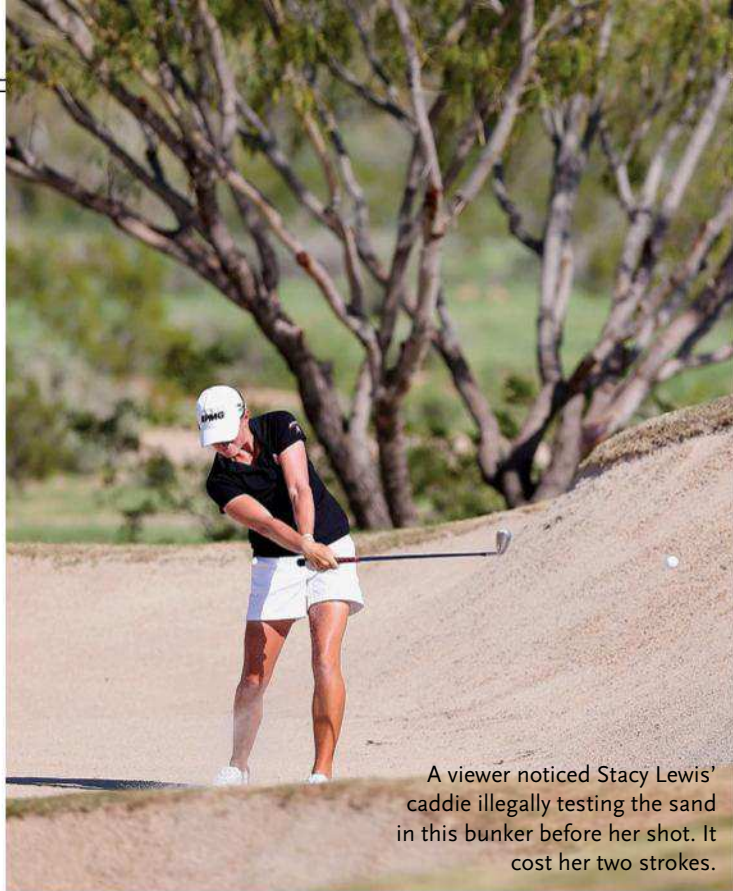
“Everybody is on TV now. They’re televising 18 holes. They are scrutinized more.”

**—PGA RULES OFFICIAL
SLUGGER WHITE**

moved a loose impediment in a hazard, a breach of the rules. When officials reviewed the tape, they concurred. Since they were concurring on Friday, a day later, that was particularly bad news.

They informed Azinger that he was being assessed a two-shot penalty for the infraction, and because it was being added to his first-round scorecard, he would be disqualified for signing for a lower score. Azinger appealed directly to PGA commissioner Deane Beman about it, but Beman said there was nothing he could do, that rules officials make the calls.

Well, not all of them.



A viewer noticed Stacy Lewis' caddie illegally testing the sand in this bunker before her shot. It cost her two strokes.

discussion was about the sand itself with Lewis asking Wilson about its firmness. Since neither caddie nor player is allowed to test the condition of sand in a designated bunker, it was a two-shot penalty. She had to sign for a 68.

"It's a ruling on intent," Lewis said then. "Our whole purpose of that shot was to find out how much sand was in the bunker. That's the unfortunate part."

There was a happy ending. She trailed by four shots going into the final round instead of two, but she blistered the course for a 64 on Sunday to win.

Lee Janzen's Wait

Lee Janzen was amazed that his putt on the 17th green, sitting right on the lip of the cup, hadn't fallen in. It was the first round of the 1998 World Series of Golf at the Firestone Country Club and Janzen, coming off his second U.S. Open victory that summer, was having a decent day. But why wouldn't this putt drop?

Then it did, probably a good 20 seconds after it had reached the lip. The crowd cheered and Janzen was pleased with his birdie 3.

When Janzen arrived at the course the following morning, on his 34th birthday, tour officials wanted to see him. A television viewer had gotten a phone message through that Janzen had violated a rule by taking more than 10 seconds to stroke the next putt. Timing a video review, it was clear that he had taken at least 20.

The rules of golf state that if a putt on the lip hangs there for more than 10 seconds it is deemed to have come to rest and the next stroke must be played. Jansen waited too long, and in doing so should have assessed himself a two-shot penalty. He didn't and thus was disqualified.

Happy birthday.

"Viewers at home should not be officials wearing stripes."

—TIGER WOODS

Tiger's Drop Seen 'Round The World

The Tiger Woods saga at the 2013 Masters went from late on Friday afternoon until the next morning, with a flurry of phone calls, texts and discussions. It all started with Woods' shot on the 15th hole, which was too perfect. Forced to lay up on the par 5, his wedge approach struck the flagstick and rebounded back into the pond in front of the green. So now Woods had to take a penalty drop from where he hit that pitch. Where he took that drop was questioned by a television viewer. Not just any television viewer, not just any armchair arbiter: This was David Eger, a former USGA and PGA Tour tournament official who had worked the Masters, was an expert in the rules of golf and now was a Champions Tour player.

Eger was home in Florida, watching the Masters on TV and helping his wife with some gardening, going in and out of the house. When he took a look at the telecast he noticed that Woods had lost a shot. Wondering what happened, he rewound the coverage and saw Woods dunk his pitch on 15, then take a drop. Rewinding it several times, he noticed that Woods had dropped the ball in the wrong place. Eger needed to contact someone in a hurry: if it was also noticed by others, but after Woods signed his card, he could be disqualified for not adding two shots.

"I knew it was going to be a penalty. I was just trying to save Tiger," Eger told CIGAR AFICIONADO.

The rules of golf required Woods to drop the ball as close to where he played it from as possible. There was a divot hole from that previous shot, but he dropped it several feet behind that divot. He did not request help from rules officials on the drop, and in a quick ESPN interview after signing his card, he said he had dropped it about two yards behind the divot hole.

The interview came after he signed his card, the thing that Eger was trying to prevent. Eger had immediately called PGA Tour official Michael Bradley who was working the tournament, but he had just left the grounds. He also sent a text to him outlining the violation. The drop had been seen on video by officials at the course, but nothing was said.

Bradley reached Fred Ridley, then the Augusta competition committee chairman (and today the club chairman) who first said the distance that Woods had dropped from the divot was "splitting hairs." But later that evening, CBS commentator Jim Nantz told Ridley of Woods' comment on the ESPN show and that there was

Twitter chatter about the legality of the drop.

On Saturday morning, Ridley and rules officials met with Woods and decided that he had taken an incorrect drop and would be penalized two strokes but would not be disqualified, certainly owing to the fact that Ridley at first didn't think Woods had done anything wrong.

Eger's call, while adding two shots to Woods' scorecard, likely ended up preventing him from being disqualified. ♦

Jeff Williams is a CIGAR AFICIONADO contributing editor.

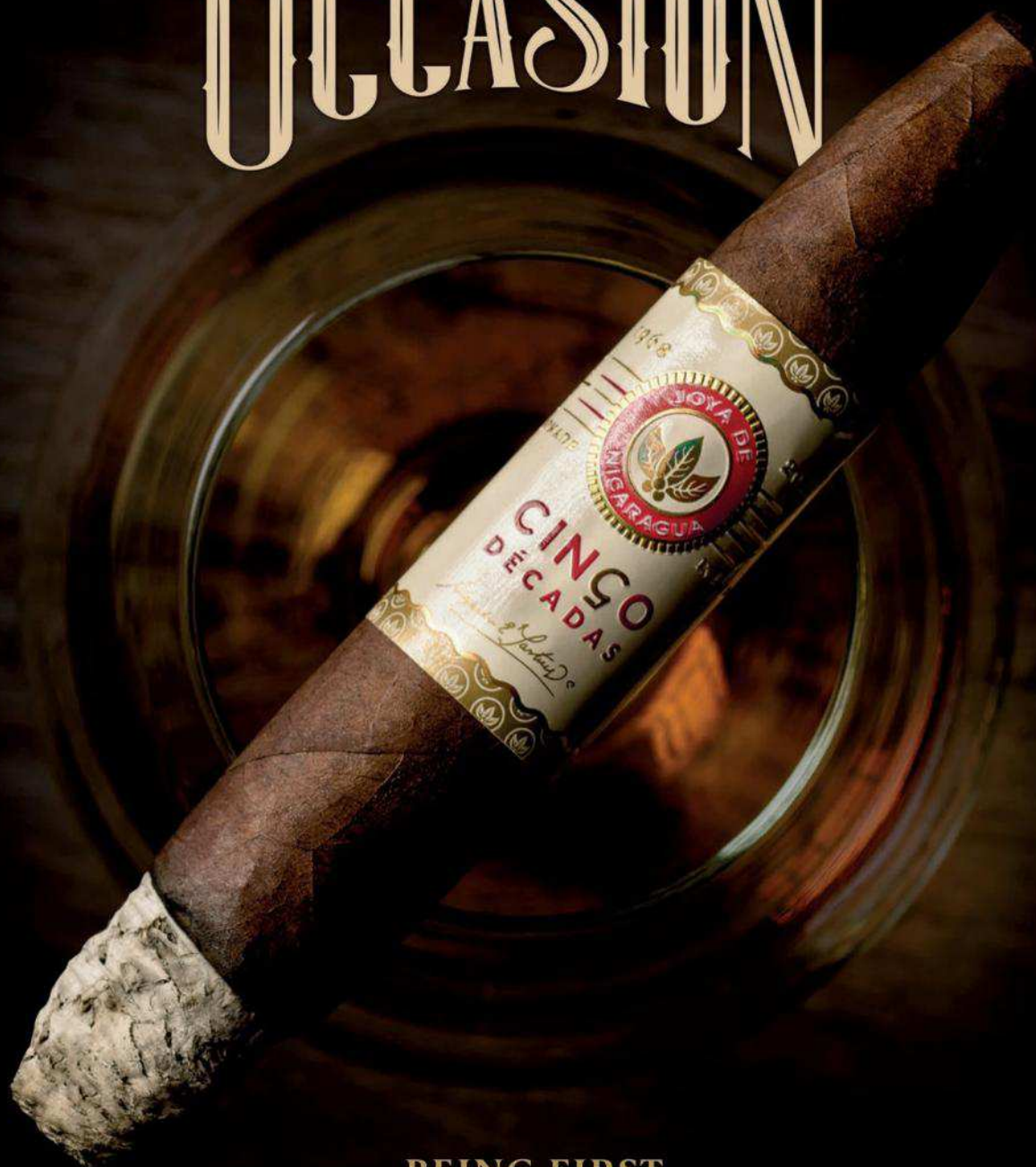


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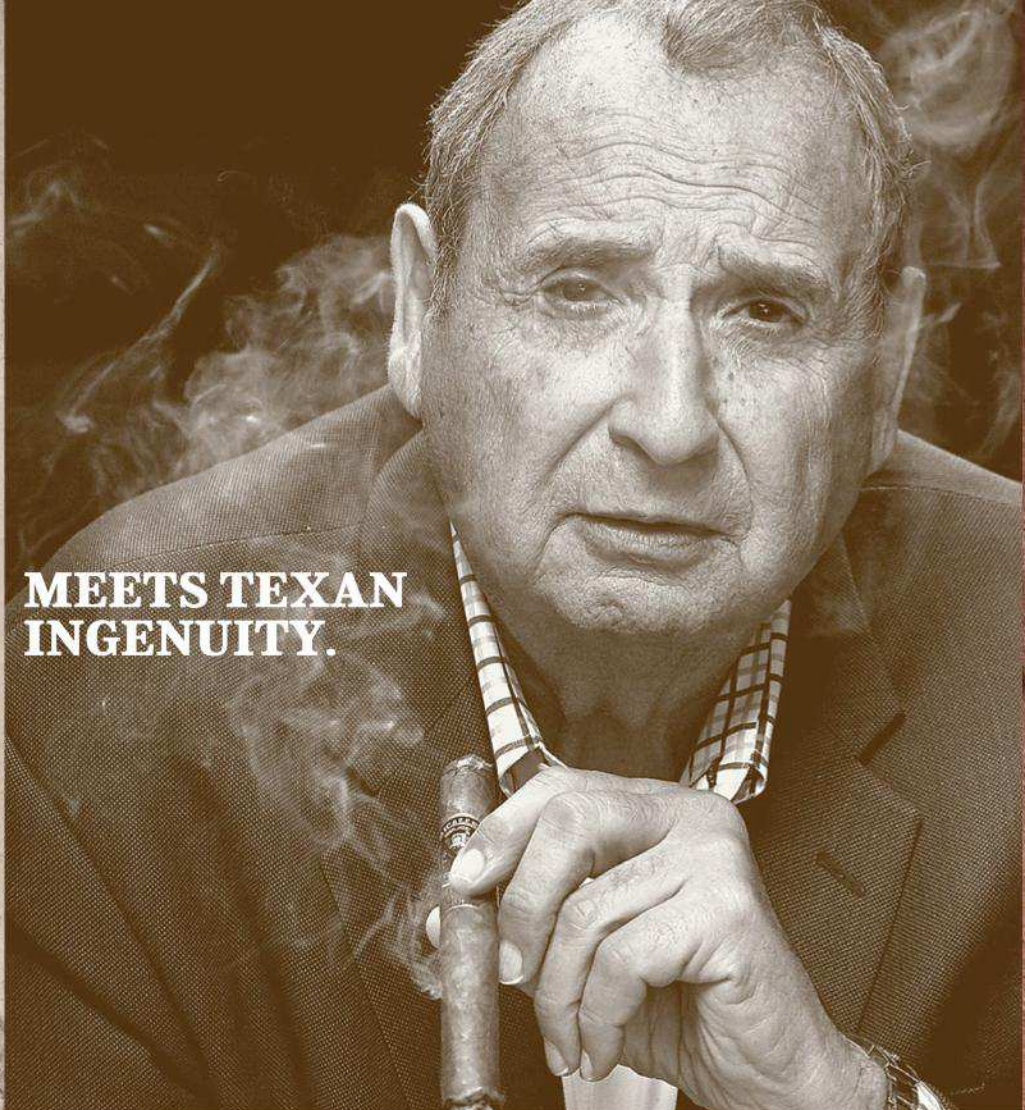
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MIRACLE IN VEGAS

Las Vegas fell in love with the Golden Knights even before the first-year hockey team played for the Stanley Cup BY ANDREW NAGY

As my cab drove down the Las Vegas Strip, I noticed a new palette of colors standing out against the bright pools of neon so famously associated with Sin City. Patches of black, gold, steel gray and red were everywhere, on T-shirts, on hats and on the billboards of local businesses. The colors are the symbol of the new pride of Sin City and the biggest Cinderella story in all of sports—the Vegas Golden Knights of the National Hockey League.

The Knights have matured from the NHL's newest desert experiment into the hottest ticket in town. Even if you don't follow the NHL, you've probably still heard of the team's unlikely success. The Golden Knights played their first game ever on October 6 (a victory), and went on to amass one of the best home records during the NHL's 2017–2018 regular season, winning the Pacific Division. They swept the Los Angeles Kings in the first round of the NHL playoffs, beat the San Jose Sharks in the second round and then defeated the Winnipeg Jets to earn the right to play for the Stanley Cup against the Washington Caps. Although Vegas fought hard in the Cup Final, they lost in five games.

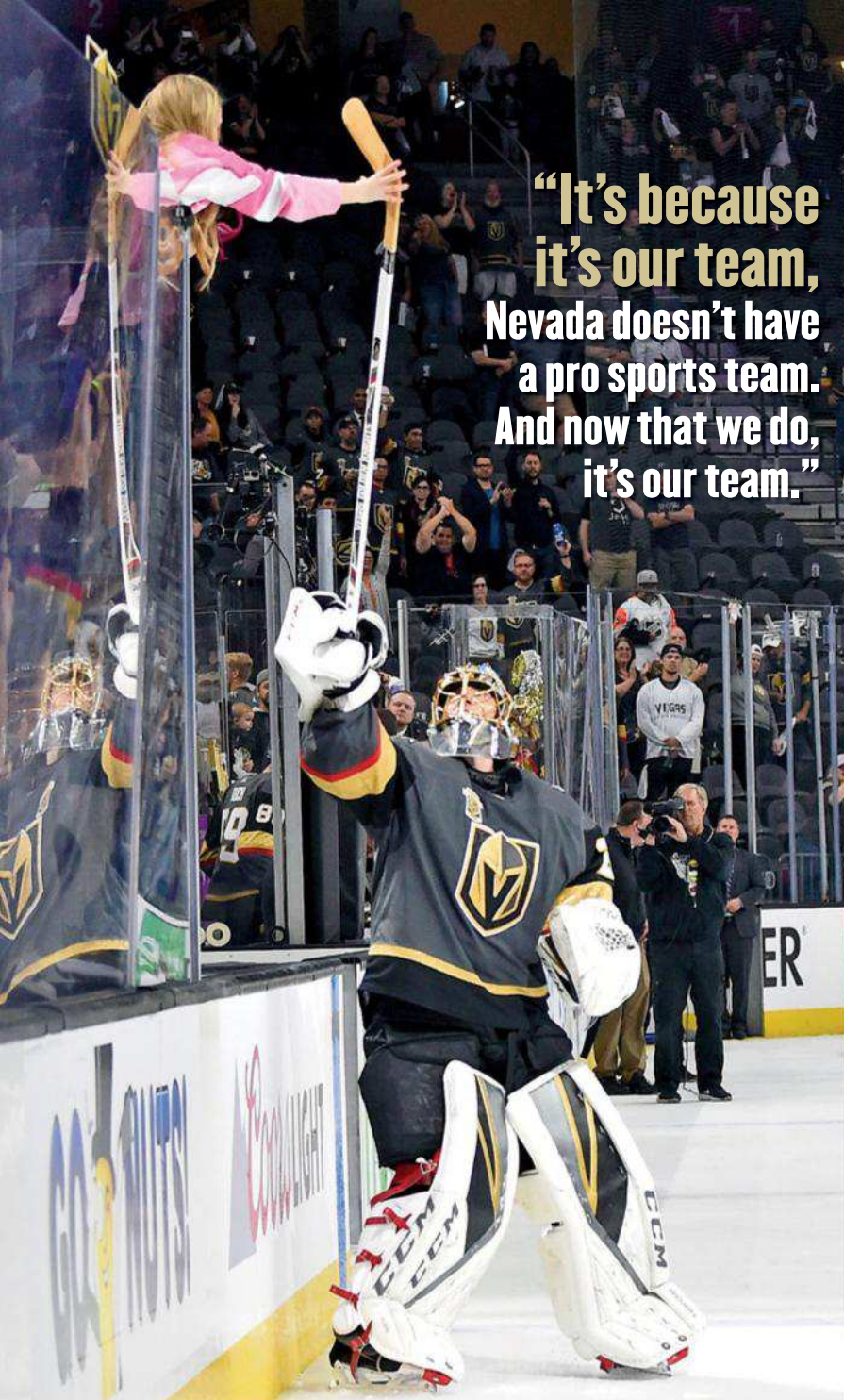
Still, expansion teams just aren't supposed to be this good, this fast. Can you imagine a first-year Major League Baseball team in the World Series? An NFL team playing in the Super Bowl in its inaugural season? An expansion NBA team making it to the championship? No team in those leagues has ever played in the big game in their first year. And in hockey, you have to go back 50 years—all the way to the 1967–68 St. Louis Blues—to find an expansion NHL team



JEFF BOTTARI/NHL VIA GETTY IMAGES



The fans celebrate along with Alex Tuch of the Vegas Golden Knights during the Stanley Cup playoffs. It was a Cinderella season for the newest team in the NHL.

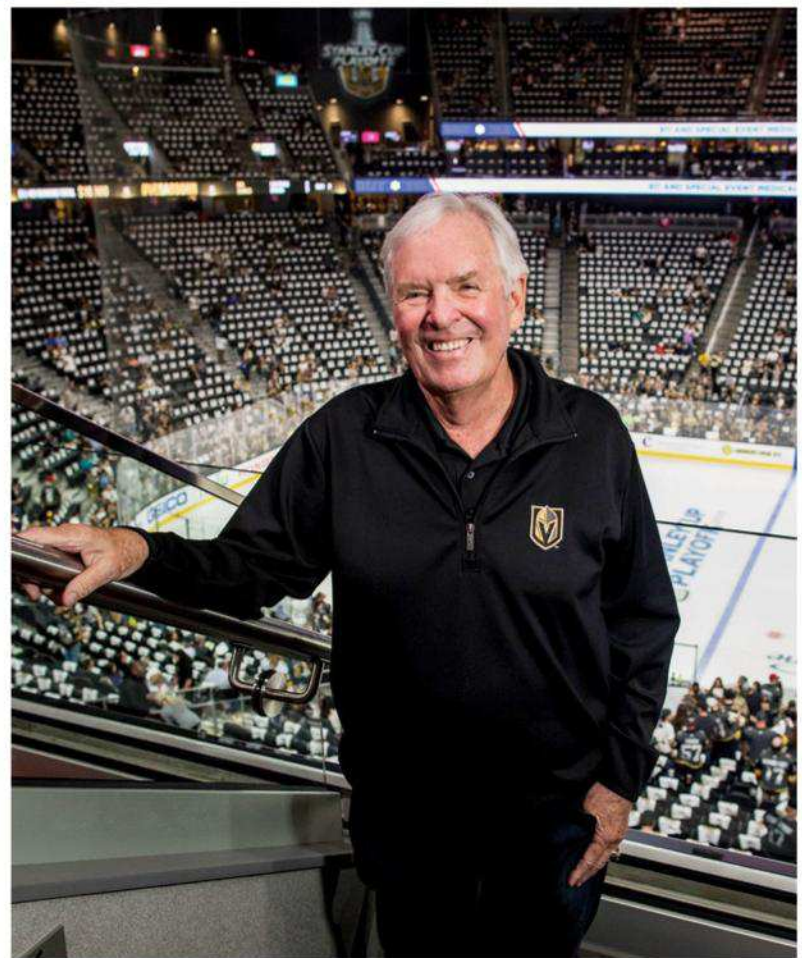


Vegas loves the Golden Knights, and the Knights love the people of Vegas. Above, All-Star goalie Marc-André Fleury hands a stick to a young fan. Top right, team owner Bill Foley above the home ice at T-Mobile Arena.

with comparable success to the Golden Knights. But even that comparison falls flat, because the Blues were one of six teams added to the league that year, all of which were put in the same conference, and in those days only four teams in each conference made the playoffs, so the Blues (who were swept in four games in the Stanley Cup Finals) faced a much easier path.

Simply put, the Golden Knights have done better in year one than any pro sports team in history. And the people of Sin City absolutely love them.

Vegas' embracement of the only local major league sports team in town (until the Raiders arrive in 2020) wasn't subtle. After all, this is Las Vegas, where you go big or go home. In April, just as the Golden Knights were beginning their historical playoff run, the New York-New York Hotel & Casino draped a Golden



Knights home jersey over its 150-foot replica of the Statue of Liberty. Farther down the Strip, a Vegas Golden Knights rally flag was placed in the outstretched hand of the Augustus Caesar statue in front of Caesars Palace.

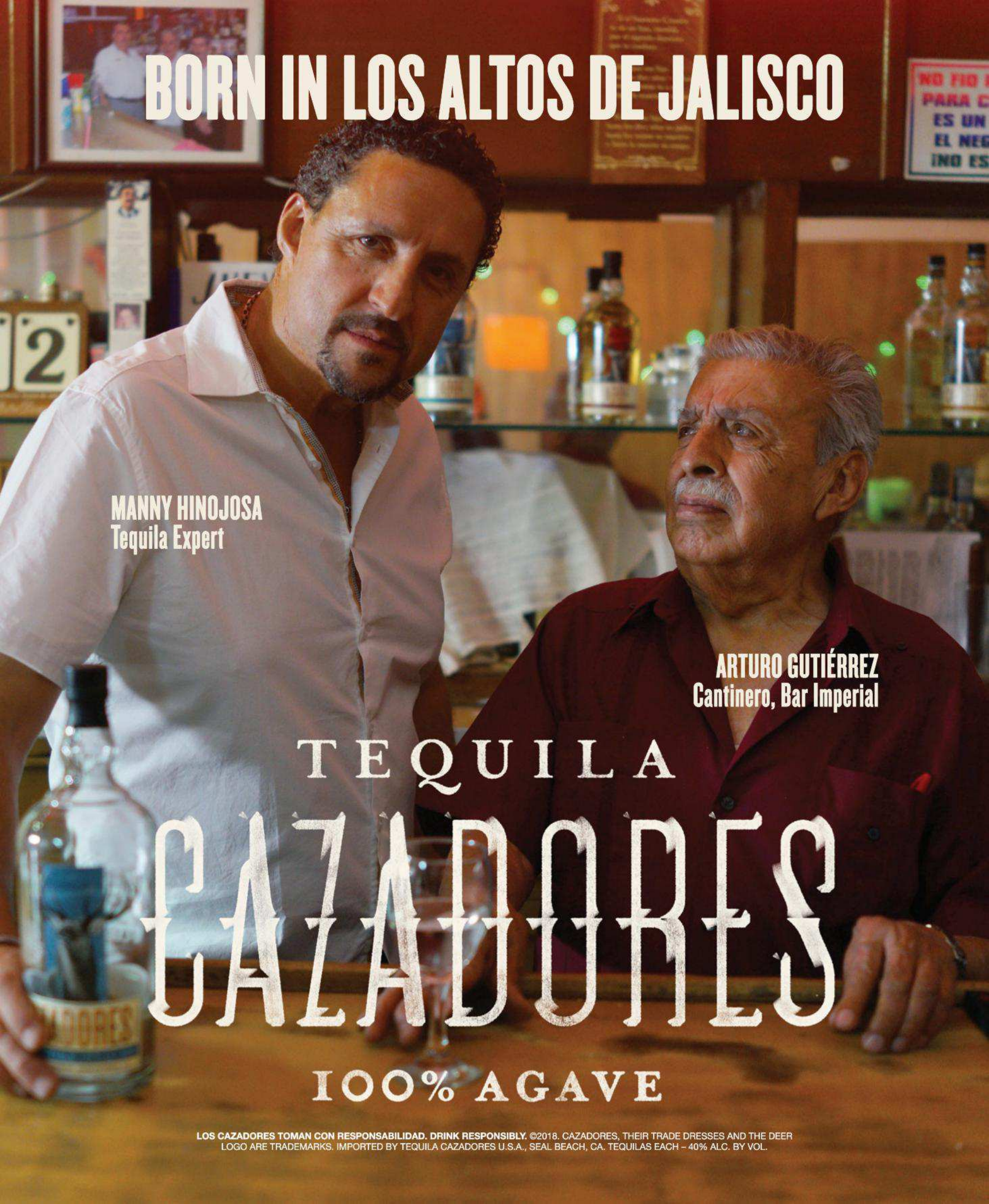
During a visit to Vegas, I set out to find out why the city in the desert so closely associated with gambling, vices and conferences fell so quickly in love with its new toy.

"It's because it's our team," says Edward, my cab driver. "Nevada doesn't have a pro sports team. And now that we do, it's our team."

Golden Knights owner Bill Foley echoed this sentiment. Like most, Foley assumed Las Vegasans visited the Strip all the time. Then he moved to nearby Summerlin in 2015 and had a realization: Locals rarely visit the Strip. In fact, most Las Vegasans intentionally avoid it. "What dawned on me is we are bringing something for local residents to identify with and be a part of," he tells me before a game. "And it's true. It's not 'the Strip.' It's their own team."

A bartender offered a different reason, one that's a little deeper. The Golden Knights home-opener was October 10, 2017, only nine days after the tragic Mandalay Bay mass shooting in which 58 people were killed. Recognizing that Las Vegasans were grieving and in dire need to heal emotionally, the players wanted to do something to help. So they reached out to first-responders and families affected by the tragedy. During the pregame ceremony of the Knights' first home game, the players were each escorted out to the ice by a first-responder. The names of the victims were emblazoned onto the ice, and a 58-second moment was held to honor those who lost their lives. The team even went so far as to retire jersey No. 58.

"You want to identify your city with something, anything, other than that tragedy," says the bartender, who declined to give

A photograph of two men in a bar. On the left, a man with dark hair and a goatee, wearing a white button-down shirt, looks towards the camera. On the right, an older man with grey hair and a mustache, wearing a dark red button-down shirt, looks off to the side. The background shows a bar with various bottles and a sign that reads "NO FID PARA C ES UN EL NEG INO ES".

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The Vegas Golden Knights (in black) fighting for the puck against the Washington Capitals in the 2018 Stanley Cup Finals.

me her name. “And the team helped us find that something. With such a senseless act, you want to try and come together to find some sort of sense and logic.”

The players “went to the convention center where people were still trying to figure out if someone was still alive or not,” says Foley. “They went to the hospitals and they saw people who had been wounded. I mean it was pretty gut wrenching for these guys, but they were just fantastic.”

The Golden Knights have endeared themselves to the local community in other ways as well, particularly in their practices, which have become something of legend. The team works out in a new \$30 million, 146,000-square-foot rink called City National Arena, also located in Summerlin. Whereas most NHL teams practice with perhaps a few fans onlooking, anywhere from 500 to 1,000 energetic fans routinely visit the rink (admission for practice is free of charge) to cheer and watch their Golden Knights participate in drills.

On the day that I visit, I’m sitting next to a father and mother with three kids. All are wearing some sort of Golden Knights gear, and the children are each holding knee-hockey sticks. While the dad was a hockey fan even before the Golden Knights came on the scene, it was hard to get his kids into the sport.

“Now that they have an NHL team they can watch every night, they are fans,” he says, with a big grin. His son rattles off his favorite players while he watches them intently.

Moments after the practice ends, one of the players skates off the ice. Instead of heading to the locker room, he walks straight to a crowd of young fans to sign autographs. Around 30 kids are there, and the player doesn’t leave until he has signed for each one. In fact, he wants to give a lucky kid his stick. Wanting to spread the love around, though, he breaks his stick in two to hand a piece to two kids. Their eyes light up.

Later that night, I’m at Game 5 of the Golden Knights second round playoff series against the Sharks. The pregame inside T-Mobile arena, simply put, is the best I’ve ever witnessed at a hockey game. A \$1 million LED light setup in the rafters flashes images of the players to the ice as 18,000 screaming fans wave white towels. Then the lights darken, and the crescendo of *The Avengers* theme song blasts through the arena’s speakers. The words “Vegas, Are You Ready?” appear on the ice and on the scoreboard (or the Knight Tron as it’s called).

Suddenly, a skater dressed in black and holding a Sharks flag skates onto the ice. The crowd boos and hisses. On the other side of the ice, another actor, dressed in golden armor, skates out. The two then do battle, in a choreographed fight reminiscent of the shows put on at the Excalibur Hotel just up the street. The Golden Knight prevails, stabbing his sword into the enemy. The crowd erupts, and a sound meter on the Knight Tron hits 105 decibels. The building is literally vibrating underneath my seat, and I find it impossible not to get caught up in the energy.

For most of the first period, the Golden Knights’ forecheck is relentless. The Sharks just can’t seem to find an answer, and the Knights just keep pressing their offense, wave after wave. Finally, with only seconds left in the period, forward James Neal slams home a rebound and the crowd noise following the goal is so loud I can’t hear the sound of the horn as the period ends. The team doesn’t stop there, eventually building a 4-0 lead. The screams get louder with each goal, and the Knights win 5-3.

I honestly can’t remember having this much fun at a hockey game. Perhaps this is the ace up the sleeve of the Golden Knights. The organization has made the game of hockey fun for the fans, a great escape from their lives for three hours.

How can you not love this team? As the crowd loves to chant, “Go, Knights, Go!” ❖

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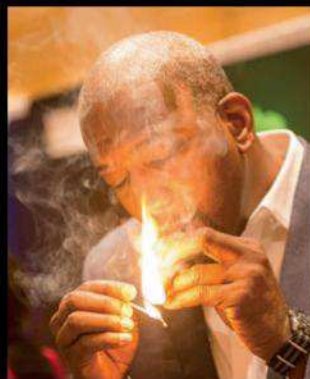
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All Bets Are On

Now that sports betting is legal outside of Nevada, some states are starting to cash in

BY MICHAEL KAPLAN
ILLUSTRATION BY MAX-O-MATIC

This fall promises to be a sweet season for football fans in New Jersey and Delaware. Rather than watching games in crowded sports bars or on their sofas, devotees in those states will cut out to racetracks and/or casinos where they'll catch the gridiron action on enormous state-of-the-art screens, with food and drink and comfy seats at the ready. Most critically, though, they'll be able to legally bet on the matchups that unfold in front of them.

That is thanks to the recent Supreme Court decision to shut down the longstanding ban on sports betting outside of licensed operations in Nevada. As per the court, states (rather than the federal government) will be left to decide on whether or not their citizens can bet on sports. Long before the gavel slammed down, though, legislators from New Jersey (who were fighting for the change) and Delaware (where parlay betting became legal in 2009) had already decided. "When the decision came, for the first time in my political career, I was at a loss for words," says former New Jersey State Senator Ray Lesniak, the man who

introduced the bill some six years ago. Proudly, he adds, “We lost eight times before overturning a nationwide ban with formidable opponents such as the NFL and the NBA.”

Delaware took its first legal sports bet on June 5, and New Jersey will most assuredly be close behind. But they will definitely not be alone for long. Right now, there are 40 states where casino gambling is legal in some form, and many of them are already looking to get in on the sports-betting action. “Eighteen states have considered legislation [to have sports betting],” says Casey Clark, vice president of strategic communications at the American Gaming Association, which represents the U.S. casino industry. “Whoever is out of the gate quickest will have the best opportunities to profit.” That is because they will enjoy windows of time with no competition from neighboring states. Unfortunately for New Jersey and Delaware, the first states poised to be out, they happen to border one another.

In addition to Delaware and New Jersey (which may also be up and running by the time you read this), Pennsylvania, New York, Mississippi and West Virginia all have at least the preliminary approvals to begin offering sports betting. “Mississippi is ready to go,” says Clark, “but they are not set to offer mobile betting. I think opportunities are left on the table by doing it that way. I can see New York passing something this year, but I think it’ll take a while to get up and running.” West Virginia lawmakers approved mobile and brick-and-mortar sports betting, though negotiations between the casinos and the state government are ongoing.

Most puzzling of all the contenders is Pennsylvania. Sports betting has been approved but its current terms may not be tenable for casino operators. “The state wants a 36 percent tax rate from the casinos [while other jurisdictions that have gotten far enough to figure out tax policies are in the 10- to 20-percent range],” says Clark. “In order for a licensed operator to offer sports betting under those circumstances, they will have to lower the odds. Nobody will leave illegal sites like Bovada to get a worse deal from a legal sports book.” Apps for illegal, offshore sites are already on many people’s phones. “If, say, Bovada offers 10 to 1 on a bet and the casino in Pennsylvania offers 6 to 1, you will go with Bovada,” Clark adds.

The longer the state of Pennsylvania and its casinos waste time and dicker around over tax rates, the longer New Jersey racetracks and casinos will lure the state’s substantial pool of players and generate much needed revenue. “New Jersey should get a lot of credit,” says Clark. “They brought the case to the Supreme Court, they pursued it and they should benefit by being on the front end of things.”

According to the American Gaming Association, sports betting is a \$150 billion industry in this country. Considering that most of the betting is done illegally, it’s irrational that for more than 25 years most states outside of Nevada could not license or authorize wagering on sports. Hence, for as long as most of us can remember, the

opportunity to watch a day’s worth of games and bet on them lawfully has accounted for much of Vegas’s draw, especially during football and basketball seasons.

Why did it require a six-year uphill struggle to convince federal lawmakers that New Jersey (and, as part of the package, every other state in the union) has a right to decide whether or not it should allow people to bet sports in its casinos? “People ask me and I tell them that I really have no clue,” says Chris Andrews, sports book director at South Point Hotel, Casino and Spa in Las Vegas and author of the forthcoming *Then One Day*, his book of recollections from the sports-betting world. “For some reason, America has a puritanical streak running through it. You can buy guns at the corner store but you can’t bet on a game.”

The unreasonably uptight view of sports betting has a long and dirty history. Prior to the 1919 White Sox games-fixing scandal—a group of gamblers, including the notorious Arnold Rothstein, bribed players to blow the World Series that year—betting on sports loomed in a gray area where it was not illegal nor was it exactly legal. Fallout from the ham-handed rigging, which allowed Rothstein alone to win \$250,000 by betting

Right now, there are 40 states where casino gambling is legal in some form, and many of them are already looking to get in on the sports-betting action.

against a team that would get dubbed the Black Sox, encouraged lawmakers across the nation to make betting on sports illegal.

The goal was to declaw cheaters and to keep sporting events clean. But of course that did not work. Just think of point-shaving scandals over the years and the high-profile gambling of Pete Rose. Says casino bookie Andrews, “If things are hidden under the basket, you open up opportunities for corruption. We want a fair game and the proper odds. Legal bookmakers earn money when the games are played fairly. Plus we serve as watchdogs and file reports when betting activity looks suspicious.”

In 1949, the state of Nevada was not unlike today’s Atlantic City, where casinos have long been struggling to remain solvent. Three years after the opening of Bugsy Siegel’s Flamingo, which stands as Sin City’s first modern gambling emporium, tourism was flagging. In a bid to attract interest, state legislators decided to imbue the Nevada casinos with the then-novel offering of legal sports betting. The idea: Game-loving gamblers would flock there to lay down money on their favorite teams.

But there was a problem. In 1951, the federal government, possibly piqued by Nevada green-lighting sports betting, levied a 10 percent tax on revenue from the books. On top of state taxes and various operating expenses, there was a lot to overcome (not unlike with the proposed situation in Pennsylvania). In short order, sports betting became a fringe business for casinos.

At the same time, illegal sports betting, often benefiting organized crime, boomed. Those entities were not subjected to the 10 percent tax, and criminals found the taking of bets to be fabulously profitable. People like to wager on sports and they have shown it through their willingness to deal with criminals.



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“It’s supply and demand,” says Andrews. “If there is demand for a product, be it guns or drugs or gambling, people will be out there to satisfy the demand.”

In a bid to curb the illicit betting on sports, Robert F. Kennedy spearheaded the Federal Wire Act of 1961. This made bookmaking outside of Nevada federally illegal in the United States and introduced jail sentences for those convicted of doing it. Of course, the law failed to deter illegal bookmakers from taking wagers or the public from making them.

By 1976, the U.S. government acknowledged as much. A report called “Commission on the Review of the National Policy Toward Gambling” bluntly stated that “gambling is inevitable.” It pretty much conceded what most people already knew: Americans will gamble whether it is legal or not. That same year, the federal government cut its Vegas sports-book tax-take from 10 percent to 2 percent. Not coincidentally, 1976 was the year when major casinos found it juicy to have sports books and that facet of the industry soared. It has yet to come down. Last year, Nevada’s books earned a record-setting \$248.7 million. The state, which taxes at a rate of 6.75 percent, collected millions in sports-betting revenue—alongside a federal tax that has since been reduced to one-quarter of one percent.

Surely, the success in Las Vegas has not been hurt by federal government decisions to clamp down on other states pursuing sports-betting opportunities. In 1992, the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA) prohibited any states from introducing legal sports betting. This is the ruling that New Jersey successfully rallied to overthrow.

Lesniak fought since 2012 to legalize sports betting in the Garden State. The battle turned into a six-year slog, often written off as his Waterloo. “Nobody gave me a snowball’s chance in Hell,” he crowed soon after PASPA was tossed. “I was criticized for throwing nothing more than a Hail Mary pass and today I completed it.”

Now that sports betting in Lesniak’s home state is revving up, what will it ultimately look like? As of this writing, Monmouth Racetrack, in Oceanport, New Jersey, is the most ready to start taking bets and the expectation is that it will do so ahead of other Garden State operations. “There already is the \$3 million William Hill Sports Bar on our property,” says Dennis Drazin, CEO of Darby Development, which operates the track, explaining that the venerable London-based bookmaker whom the bar is named for will be working with Monmouth on its sports betting enterprise. “They’re putting another \$5 million into building out a Vegas-style sports book.”

That is pretty much the bottom-line: Sports betting across the country, at tracks and in casinos (plus, who knows, maybe even in bars), will look an awful lot like doing it in Nevada. “The Nevada model works,” says Andrews. “Gaming people I’ve spoken with believe that we have a good system in place.”

Things are helped of course by the fact that longstanding Vegas casino companies such as Boyd Gaming, Caesars Entertainment and MGM Resorts International have outposts all over the United States. For independent operations, the Hills of the world appear to be likely collaborators. “Most racetracks will partner

with somebody from the outside,” says Drazin. “If somebody comes in with a \$100,000 bet, you need the expertise to know whether to take it or not.”

The most obvious winners in all of this will be the casinos and racetracks that get chances to participate in sports betting early. States that are friendly to this pursuit will benefit as well. In New Jersey, for example, taxes on sports books are expected to be 9.75 percent for profits on in-person betting, 13 percent for money bet remotely. As of this writing, the professional sports leagues are also rallying for a piece of the action, known as an “integrity fee.” Vegas has thus far succeeded in not paying it. In West Virginia, the government agreed to the fee, but casinos are balking. Other states may have their work cut out for them. Lesniak does not want New Jersey to share its money. “We’re not paying them tribute,” he says.

When it comes to being lucky winners, it’s tough to beat the just-opened Hard Rock Hotel & Casino and Ocean Resort, Atlantic City’s new spots that seem well placed to benefit from the windfall of sports betting without having had to weather the devastatingly hard times that closed down five of Atlantic City’s gambling properties in recent years. Last fall, Borgata announced plans to build a \$7 million Vegas-worthy sports book; reports



New Jersey State Senator Raymond Lesniak (right) with then-Governor Chris Christie at the U.S. Supreme Court in December. Lesniak fought a six-year slog to legalize sports betting in New Jersey.

have it that the casino is hoping to be taking bets ahead of its Atlantic City competitors. And if the cost of construction sounds high, it really isn’t. “Investments [to put up inviting sports books] are not significant,” Lesniak says. “You need wraparound TVs and technology. You are not building theme parks.”

The big losers are illegal bookies and offshore operators. Though they won’t be put out of business, they will certainly take a hit. And Vegas will lose some of its allure as people find it cheaper (and easier) to bet legally while staying closer to home.

Lesniak, the man who made it all happen, seems confident that the United States will soon be a country that embraces legal sports betting. “Everybody except Utah will step up,” he predicts. “The NCAA said that they will not do tournaments out of New Jersey [if sports betting gets legalized there]. I say that soon the only state where they will be able to hold their tournaments will be Utah.” ♦

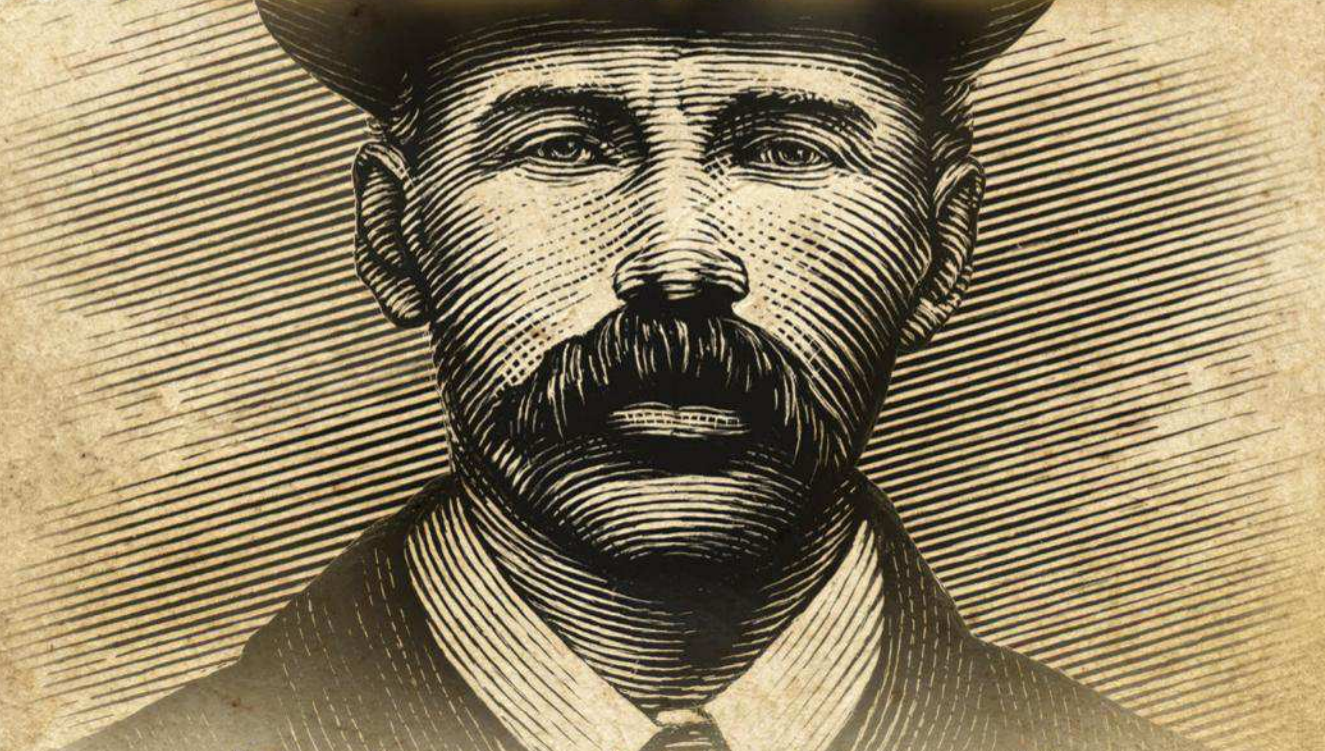
Michael Kaplan, a CIGAR AFICIONADO contributing editor, writes frequently on gambling.



ESCAPE TO PARADISE

SAN CRISTOBAL

IT'S NICE TO BE
WANTED



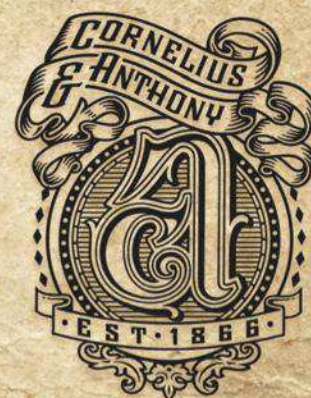
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How to Bet on Sports

Don't place your bets on the big (or small) game without our expert's guidance

BY DANNY SHERIDAN • ILLUSTRATION BY MAX-O-MATIC

Since May 14, 2018 when the Supreme Court legalized sports betting in any state that wants it, several dozen states have been scrambling to get in on the action. And the potential amount of that action is considerable: I estimate more than \$200 billion is bet illegally each year on sports in the United States. “The Supreme Court’s decision is a victory for millions of Americans who want to bet on sports in a safe and regulated manner,” says Geoff Freeman, president and CEO of the American Gaming Association. “Before this ruling, the government was turning tens of millions of Americans into criminals for the simple act of enjoying [betting] on sports.”

So will this new law put illegal U.S. and offshore bookies out of business? No, because bettors accustomed to betting with them don’t want their wins or losses disclosed to the IRS or

newspapers. But this new law is certain to drive millions of Americans to embrace sports betting. Those who bet already are likely to bet more, and the law change means new bettors will enter the sports betting world.

While it's undeniably a new day for sports betting, it's important to tackle this land of opportunity with solid advice. There are smart sports bets and there are sports bets to avoid, and I have proven strategies to help guide you. Here are my suggestions on how to intelligently bet on college and pro football, Major League Baseball, the NBA and college basketball.

Baseball: Play The Streaks Early

If a baseball team wins three games in a row, you need to bet on them until they lose. Conversely, if a team loses three in a row, bet against them until they win. I call this the Streak Theory, and it does very well in April and May. I'd recommend not using it after May 31st, as oddsmakers sharpen their lines after the first two months of the Major League Baseball season. Just this year alone, there were several long (and profitable) streaks. The New York Yankees went on a nine-game winning streak in late April, and an eight-game streak in early May. The Mets and Boston each won nine in a row in April, while Tampa Bay and Milwaukee had 8-0 runs. In April and May, Kansas City lost nine in a row, and Cincinnati, Minnesota and Tampa Bay all notched eight-game losing streaks. Streaks can put money in your pocket.

But don't bet baseball every day. It's guaranteed to be very hazardous to one's wealth. The idea of the Streak Theory is to reduce your plays and to take advantage of unexpected early season streaks.

The Three-Game Theory Of College Football

Most bettors make the mistake of using comparative scores when handicapping college football games, which lands them on the favorite, but that strategy will give you a loser 70 percent of the time against the spread. I do just the opposite, in what I call my Three-Game Theory. For example, because Alabama beat LSU, and LSU beat Auburn, most bettors incorrectly assumed that favored Alabama would rout underdog Auburn when they squared off in the Iron Bowl last November. In the matchup, Auburn (who I picked) upset Alabama 26-14. By the same token, Miss State beat LSU, LSU beat Ole Miss, so therefore many people picked 14-point home favorite Miss State to rout Ole Miss in their rival season-ending "Egg Bowl" match. But as my good friend Lee Corso says, "not so fast my friend." Ole Miss won outright, 31-28.

So why bet against the favorite when they've beaten a team that has already beaten their upcoming opponent? The favorite team in that situation, knowing they've beaten a team that beat the team they're playing, enters the game understandably very overconfident—which is the exact opposite feeling of Team C, the underdog. And that's why I pick the underdog when this situation arises.

There are plenty of other examples of this theory paying off. Ohio State beat Penn State, Penn State beat Iowa, but Iowa upset Ohio State 55-24. Arizona beat UCLA, UCLA beat Arizona State, but Arizona State upset Arizona 42-30. FSU beat Wake Forest, Wake crushed Boston College but Boston College (a six-point underdog) demolished FSU 35-3. Convinced?

Pro Basketball: Ignore The Regular Season

There are just too many games in the regular NBA season (82) for a serious bettor to pay attention to, and that means it's impossible for players to play every night to their mental and physical ability. It's the same with the playoffs. Today's NBA playoffs consist solely of seven-game series, which often produces clunkers against the spread. Don't bet the NBA regular season or individual playoff games. Do bet early first- and second-round NBA playoff series small underdogs, but don't bet on 5:1 or greater series underdogs, who usually lose to superior high-ranked teams.

College Football: Distance Makes The Bet Grow Fonder

Put your money on the first six bowl underdogs that play on the opening Saturday (last year, that was December 16). Usually, those teams are the most motivated, and last year, they went 5-1 against the spread. Double up your bet if that 5-7 bowl team is playing far away from home. Nebraska, with its 5-7 record in 2015, upset 8-4 UCLA as a 5 1/2-point dog, 37-29. The game was played in Santa Clara, California, about 1,600 miles away from Cornhusker country. San José State, a one-point favorite with a 5-7 record, beat Georgia State 27-16 in the 2015 AutoNation Cure Bowl. They were playing in Orlando, nearly 2,800 miles from home.

College Basketball: Watch The Rematch

In college basketball, conference foes play each other twice in the regular season. When a team beats the spread in the first meeting, bet against that team in the rematch. If the point spread loser of the first game also loses straight up and the first-game loser is a road underdog, double your bet in the rematch.

NFL Regular Season: Look To The Sequel

The same strategy for betting on regular season college basketball applies to division foes in the NFL regular season—bet against the team that beats the spread the first time they meet.

Pass On Parlays

Never bet on basketball or football parlays. The odds of correctly picking a two-team parlay against the spread is 3:1 against you (with a bookie payout of 2.65:1). In a three-team parlay, those odds increase to 7:1 (payout is 5:1), and a four-team parlay leaves you with 15:1 odds against you (the payout is only 10:1). Need I say more?

Bet Early, Bet Late

Finally, bet a favorite early in the week. Betting the underdog? Save your bet for as late as possible on game day. Why? The public loves to bet on favorites, so it's best to place favorite bets the minute the line is released. Favorites, more often than not, are bet up during the week, so a team that opens as a 5 1/2-point favorite will move a point or two (or more) higher by game time. Conversely, if you like the underdog, wait right until game time or the day of the game, as you'll get the most value on them as the line moves in your favor. That's how you get the best value on a favorite or underdog. ❖

CIGAR AFICIONADO contributor Danny Sheridan appears frequently in major newspapers and on major TV networks.



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When it's winter and men's spirits are frozen hard, they tend to impose drinking fiats: Never have a Gin & Tonic after Labor Day; don't mix Scotch with anything but water; never serve Egg Nog until the thermometer drops below freezing. Happily, when the weather thaws, so do the rules for imbibing. All manner of colorful, refreshing drinks are fair game when relaxing poolside or on the patio. The point is to lower your internal temperature and quench your thirst, not get into mixological points of order. It's time to mix freely with fruit juices and pile riotous garnishes into glasses meant for parched guests. If you're thinking summer drinking season is a time when anything goes, you're almost right. But remember the one maxim that you mustn't ever break: always have plenty of ice on hand.

5 CLASSIC SUMMER COCKTAILS

Bourbon Smash

- 3 ounces Bourbon
- ½ lemon, cut in wedges
- 6 mint leaves
- 2 dashes orange bitters (optional)
- 1 tablespoon simple syrup

Gently muddle (despite the name, resist the urge to smash) four mint leaves with bitters, lemon wedges and simple syrup in the bottom of a mixing glass. Fill with ice and shake. Strain over large ice cubes in an Old-Fashioned glass. Garnish with two mint leaves.



Warm weather calls for entertaining with refreshing and vibrant drinks

BY JACK BETTRIDGE • PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF HARRIS

DAIQUIRI

Sorry, Cuba Libre and Mojito, but no cocktail is more closely associated with Cuba than the Daiquiri. Born at the beginning of the 20th century, it's named for a beach in the southeast of the country. However, the drink really came of age on the island's opposite side decades later when Havana was America's playground. (See sidebar, next page). The Daiquiri's seminal roots can be traced to two centuries earlier when grog (diluted rum, lime juice and sugar) was rationed in the British navy. What differentiates the modern version is ice—the form of which is still argued today. Our preference is to shake the drink with large cubes, strain and serve it straight up in a cocktail glass. But on a torrid day an argument can certainly be

made for the sort of icy slurries that island resorts crush in a blender. A good compromise is a highball presentation that stays cold, but isn't as watered down. Where we stray from most recipes is in the type of rum to use—where most call for clear varieties, we say to use dark, aged rum. Follow our lead and a rum/lime synergy occurs that takes the drink to whole new levels.

TOM COLLINS

Certainly, many mixed-drink arguments center on their ingredients or proportions thereof (consider the ongoing Martini ration debates), but few disputes rest upon the names themselves. The Tom Collins is the exception. Once variously called the Tom Collins, John Collins and even Jim Collins, this gin concoction even

has recipes based on other spirits (vodka, Irish whiskey, Tequila, applejack and Bourbon, etc.) that take such first names as Ivan, Mike, Pedro, Jack and Colonel. We'll likely never know whence the surname came, but one theory holds that the given name Tom originally referred to the use of Old Tom gin, a sweeter alternative to London dry. The Tom Collins gets its foam from seltzer water (unlike the Gin Fizz, which calls for a shaken egg white). Furthermore, to be a proper Tom Collins it must be served in a glass of the same name, a taller and thinner version of a highball glass. The shape serves to spread the large cubes throughout the height of the glass. While the convenience of using powdered recipes may be alluring, avoid them for proper results.



Daiquiri

2 ounces aged rum
 ¾ ounces fresh lime juice
 ¾ ounces simple syrup
 1 lime wheel

In an ice-filled shaker, add rum, lime juice and simple syrup (one part cane sugar, one part water heated and stirred). Shake and strain into a coupe or cocktail glass. Garnish with lime wheel.



Tom Collins

3 ounces gin
 (traditionally Old Tom)
 1 lemon
 1 tablespoon simple syrup
 1 lemon wedge
 Seltzer water

Squeeze lemon and mix juice in a Collins glass with gin and simple syrup. Fill with large ice cubes. Top with seltzer. Garnish with lemon wedge.



Singapore Sling

1 ounce gin
 ½ ounce cherry brandy
 ¼ ounce Bénédictine
 ¼ ounce Cointreau
 4 ounces pineapple juice
 ½ ounce lime juice
 1 dash Angostura bitters
 2 teaspoons grenadine
 1 pineapple wedge
 1 Maraschino cherry

Pour all ingredients over ice into a mixing glass. Shake and strain over fresh ice into a Collins or highball glass. Garnish with pineapple and cherry stuck on a toothpick.



Tequila Sunrise

1½ to 2 ounces Tequila
 Orange juice
 ½ ounce grenadine syrup
 (to taste)
 1 orange slice
 1 Maraschino cherry

Pack a highball or Collins glass with ice and add Tequila. Add orange juice to within a half inch of the rim, and pour grenadine over the top. Allow the red syrup to sink to the bottom and create the rosy dawn effect. (Resist the temptation to stir.) Garnish with orange and cherry. Serving with a straw will preserve the sunrise.

SINGAPORE SLING

The first known written reference to a cocktail dates to 1806, and describes it as a “bittered sling.” But what’s a sling? The Oxford English dictionary says it’s “a sweetened drink of spirits, especially gin, and water.” Webster’s adds lemon juice. Neither begins to define the complexity of what is today served at the Raffles Hotel as the Singapore Sling. The basic drink—a sling with a red hue—began to evolve on the island nation of Singapore off of the Malay Peninsula in the late 19th century. It was a way for ladies to imbibe alcohol in disguise. (Colored with grenadine, the cocktail could be passed off as a fruit drink.) Raffles claims to have invented the drink in 1915, and it went international soon after, but without much uniformity. Most recipes include citrus juice and cherry brandy. The hotel’s version has continued to evolve, adding pineapple juice, more liquors and fruit garnishes. That’s the recipe we offer here. Oddly, one component from the original definition has been dispensed with: water.

BOURBON SMASH

There are flips and slings, punches and fixes, coolers and cobbler and snappers, but the most intriguing verb-turned-noun to describe a mixed drink has to be “smash.” The name refers to the muddling of leaves in the bottom of the mixing glass, and in 1862, Jerry Thomas, author of the first American drinks book, termed the Smash “a Julep on a small plan.” Both Smashes and Juleps typically contain muddled mint, but Smashes are made with all manner of fruit. While there’s also an encyclopedic range of Julep recipes, let’s face it—most people drink the mint kind, which is made with crushed ice, served on Derby Day and contains no fruit at all. The jumping off point for tricking out a Smash came with adding lemons to the mint, and intrepid smashers have experimented with every kind of fruit (lime makes a drink evocative of the Mojito, while orange is sweeter) and herb leaf (basil, sage and tarragon). Some even add jam. We give the basic lemon recipe, but feel free to substitute.

TEQUILA SUNRISE

Say the name Tequila Sunrise and prepare to hear anyone within earshot break into an out-of-tune version of the Eagles song



The Cradle of the Daiquiri

The bar is ancient, a massive slab manned by a cadre of bartenders, each wearing a royal red apron against a bright white shirt. At the far left corner sits a statue of Papa Hemingway, one elbow on the rail, enshrined forever at a prime seat at Cuba’s most famous watering hole.

This is El Floridita, and drinks have been poured here since 1817 when it was known as La Piña de Plata, or The Silver Pineapple. As legend goes, a bartender here made so many Daiquiris that the drink became synonymous with the bar, which carries the motto “la cuna del Daiquiri,” or the cradle of the Daiquiri. Hemingway and so many others drank here. You should too.

It’s mobbed by tourists, but when you visit Havana you must stop here for at least one icy Daiquiri. The whirl of the blenders is nearly nonstop as the bartenders drizzle Havana Club into pitchers with ice, lime juice and simple syrup—welcome, sweet comfort against the heat and humidity so prevalent on this island. The standard pour is made with a young, clear version of Cuban rum, but you can—and should—ask for one made with rum añejo, older, dark rum, to make the drink fuller in flavor. Make your way to the bar (I prefer the right side, farther away from the music), order your drink and sip it slowly as you take in the scene. You can eat here as well, but there are better dining spots in Havana, so nibble on the offered plate of fried plantain chips, finish your drink then make your way back onto the streets of Old Havana and light your cigar, fortified for the rest of your evening.

—David Savona



of the same name. But it is another rock band—the Rolling Stones—that can take the credit for first spreading the news of this tasty Tequila drink with the gorgeous presentation. Before it was the simple mix of Tequila, orange juice and grenadine, the Sunrise had debuted in Arizona in the 1930s with crème de cassis, lime juice and soda water. In the early ’70s a bar called the Trident in the San Francisco Bay area changed the recipe, which not only made it easier to construct, but more obvious as

to how it got its name. Sunrise refers to the drink’s appearance, not the time of day you should drink one. (If you sip one at dawn, we won’t judge.) As it happens, the Stones soon after held the kickoff party for their 1972 tour in the same bar. Mick Jagger ordered a Margarita, but was convinced to try this newfangled Tequila Sunrise. He made converts of the whole band and because it was so easy to make they proselytized the drink across the nation that summer. ❖



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cigars

- 
- 100 CIGAR REVIEW: 79 SMOKES
The premium cigar world remains rich and vibrant, as is evident in this tasting, which showcases dynamic cigars from different countries.
- 114 THE CIGAR BUYING GUIDE
Our new buying guide makes it easy to quickly identify the strongest cigars, best values and, of course, the highest scores of the issue.
- 116 AN ICONIC CIGAR ACHIEVES PERFECTION
It took 27 years, but a Hoyo de Monterrey Double Corona from 1991 is now performing at its absolute peak. The flawless smoke scored 100 points.
- 119 THE OLDEST MAN IN THE U.S. IS STILL SMOKING
Richard A. Overton turned 112 in May, and he spent his birthday like any other day—smoking cigars.
- 120 JOYA DE NICARAGUA TURNS 50
The oldest premium cigar factory in Nicaragua celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. Its fascinating history reads like an epic novel.
- 125 CUBA REPORT: THE 20TH HABANOS FESTIVAL
Our Man in Havana, Gordon Mott, gives a firsthand account of the largest cigar festival in the world.

JEFF HARRIS

churchills

It's rare indeed to find such an extraordinary intermingling of flavors as we did in the H. Upmann Sir Winston, which scored 94 points. Being a Churchill in the Cuban portfolio puts the Sir Winston on the endangered vitola list, but its refined combinations of chocolate and marzipan give this tobacco true Viennese opulence—and a near guarantee that it will age into a sublime classic. The Alec Bradley Black Market Estelí is new, launched in late 2017 as a Nicaraguan companion to the original Black Market, which is Honduran. Ominous name aside, it scored 92 points and is a fine (and perfectly legal) example of how well Nicaraguan and Honduran tobaccos can harmonize.



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 47 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: JUNE 2017

H. UPMANN SIR WINSTON

A sweet and nutty smoke exhibiting the luxurious qualities of fine chocolate, marzipan and gingersnaps, all brought together by a slightly floral, graham cracker finish. Complex and delicious.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £32.91 STRENGTH: Medium

94



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA, HONDURAS
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ALEC BRADLEY BLACK MARKET ESTELÍ CHURCHILL

This cigar is draped in a dark, alluring wrapper. Each puff unfolds sweet notes of chocolate around a hearty core of coffee bean. The finish hints of rum cake and minerals.

U.S.: \$8.75 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

92



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: HONDURAS,
DOM. REP., PERU
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: MEXICO

MICALLEF RESERVA LIMITADA PRIVADA

Draped in a toothy cover leaf, this Churchill has a good draw and even burn. Its nutty smoke is balanced by sweeter touches of honey, cherry and a hint of caramel.

U.S.: \$42.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

91



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

ROCKY PATEL VINTAGE 1990 CHURCHILL

This Churchill gives off a big aroma of baking spices as it burns. Its woody core becomes more interesting and detailed with licorice notes, chocolate and hints of cinnamon.

U.S.: \$10.10 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

91



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, HONDURAS
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

SAN LOTANO REQUIEM CONNECTICUT CHURCHILL

Though light in appearance, this Churchill delivers a rich, creamy smoke full of brown sugar and vanilla notes that segue into a toasty finish.

U.S.: \$7.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

91



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 6 3/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ILLUSIONE CRUZADO CHURCHILL

A well-made Churchill with harmonious notes of nutmeg, sweet herbs and ground black pepper that usher in a leathery finish.

U.S.: \$11.35 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90

**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: MEXICO

LA AROMA DE CUBA MI AMOR CHURCHILL

A box-pressed maduro with an open, substantial draw. Its sweet chocolate and vanilla notes are framed by earth, wood and toast.

U.S.: \$8.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: MEXICO

LA FLOR DOMINICANA 1994 MAMBO

Though the draw of this veiny cigar is firm, the smoke is dense and chewy with notes of cedar, salt and vanilla that lead to a leathery finish.

U.S.: \$8.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

90**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

UNDERCROWN SHADE CORONA DOBLE

Packed solid with tobacco, this weighty Churchill draws beautifully, showing easygoing notes of dried fig, walnut and vanilla before a light, woody finish.

U.S.: \$9.98 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild

89**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

PADRÓN DÁMASO NO. 17

Wrapped in a golden-brown cover leaf, this large cigar draws and burns evenly offering a light, creamy smoke with a woody finish.

U.S.: \$17.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild

88**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP., MEXICO
BINDER: MEXICO
WRAPPER: CAMEROON

PARTAGAS FABULOSO

A rough, spotty cigar that burns and draws quite evenly. Muted tobacco notes in the beginning blossom a bit to show nuttiness, wood and fleeting intonations of chocolate.

U.S.: \$9.69 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

88**BAHAMAS**

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: COSTA RICA, NICARAGUA, HONDURAS
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: COSTA RICA

GRAYCLIFF CHATEAU GRAND CRU PRESIDENT

A salty, nutty Churchill with a firm draw and core of wood, but some sour cardboard notes offset the score.

U.S.: \$22.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

86**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

PDR 1878 CAPA OSCURA CHURCHILL

Tightly rolled with notes of oak, caraway seed and earth that take on a heavy mineral quality, but do not harmonize on the finish.

U.S.: \$7.32 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

86**HONDURAS**

RING GAUGE: 58 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

SAINT LUIS REY CHURCHILL

Reddish and oily with a lush draw but uneven burn. Its tangy, earthiness carries a hint of citrus and vanilla but the finish tastes heavily charred.

U.S.: \$5.88 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

86

corona gordas

While the combination of Mexican wrapper and strong Nicaraguan tobacco might be getting a little commonplace in today's premium cigar market, The Wise Man Maduro makes it interesting, as the Robusto scored 93 points and kept us wide awake with each puff. It's the creation of Nick Melillo and an offshoot of his original El Güegüense brand, which translates to "the wise man." This meaty-tasting maduro version is not only bold and delicious, it's much easier to pronounce. Also scoring 93 points was the Vegas Cubanas Generosos, which is made by My Father Cigars in Nicaragua. Originally produced in Miami, the cigar's popularity declined as the Garcia family grew its cigar manufacturing operations and expanded to Nicaragua. Vegas Cubanas practically disappeared from the market (though the Garcias say it was made in very small quantities for a few retailers). Last year, they brought the cigar back into regular production, only this time it's made with tobacco grown on their farms in Estelí and Jalapa. Like most of the cigars from the Garcias, Vegas Cubanas is rolled at My Father Cigars in Nicaragua.



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: MEXICO

THE WISE MAN MADURO ROBUSTO

A rich, cocoa-like earthiness sets the tone for this sweet-and-salty cigar, which offers notes of graham cracker and vanilla fortified by a meaty, beef stock finish.

U.S.: \$10.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

93



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

VEGAS CUBANAS GENEROSOS

Sweet, rich notes of chocolate-covered raisins lead to a salty, nutty finish. A balanced, tasty smoke with a dark wrapper and flat head.

U.S.: \$7.18 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

93



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

AVO MADURO 30 YEARS NO. 2

Enrobed in a dark, toothy wrapper, this cigar forms a firm white ash as it burns. Its chewy smoke shows notes of chocolate, zingy cedar and a slight hint of raisins.

U.S.: \$10.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

91



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: INDONESIA

GILBERTO OLIVA RESERVA 6X50

Floral intonations along with touches of wood and malted chocolate set the tone for this well-made cigar. The finish is long and satisfying, hinting of mint.

U.S.: \$6.10 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

CASA MAGNA JALAPA CLARO TORO BOX PRESS

Sharply pressed with a colorado wrapper, this toro draws evenly, showing a woody palate of cedar and mesquite, wheaty hints of cereal and the boozy aftertaste of cocktail bitters.

U.S.: \$7.20 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

89

**CUBA**

RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 5 5/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: AUGUST 2015

COHIBA SIGLO IV

First puffs of this cigar are notably salty, though it takes on some citrus notes and a bit of cocoa before its floral finish. The draw is quite firm.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £30.20 STRENGTH: Medium

89**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF
WRAPPER: MEXICO

**ROCKY PATEL VINTAGE 2006
SAN ANDREAS ROBUSTO**

This dark, oily cigar burns a bit unevenly, but imparts big notes of oak, marshmallow and coffee with hints of vanilla and sweet wood on the finish.

U.S.: \$9.55 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ARCHETYPE INITIATION TORO

Though the wrapper of this cigar is rough in texture, it imparts a toasty, creamy smoke accentuated by notes of fruit, tea and cedar. The finish is a bit dry.

U.S.: \$12.49 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

88**HONDURAS**

RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: HONDURAS
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

EIROA THE FIRST 20 YEARS 46 X 6

Neatly pressed with two sharp corners and two softer edges, this cigar is sweet and cedary up front with some lingering tanginess and spice. A straightforward smoke.

U.S.: \$12.66 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

88**CUBA**

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: NOVEMBER 2017

H. UPMANN MAGNUM 50

A predominantly woody smoke with zesty hints of citrus and smoky peatiness of Scotch. Some inconsistency in the draw was noted.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £25.84 STRENGTH: Medium

88**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, HONDURAS
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MACANUDO INSPIRADO RED TORO

This oily, veiny cigar burns evenly, but notes of coffee, fruit and wood are faint, as are muted hints of chocolate. The qualities could be more pronounced.

U.S.: \$6.99 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

87**HONDURAS**

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA,
COLOMBIA, COSTA RICA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

**S.T.K. BLACK DAHLIA BY GEORGE RICO
GRAN ROBUSTO**

Well crafted with a flat head and beautiful wrapper. The smoke is floral and woody but becomes a bit soapy-tasting on the finish.

U.S.: \$10.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

86**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 58 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: BRAZIL

PATORO SERIE P USA EDITION TORO

A fat cigar with serious combustion issues. The draw is faint and one side refuses to burn. Slight hints of citrus and toffee are overpowered by rough notes of char and mustiness.

U.S.: \$11.36 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

83

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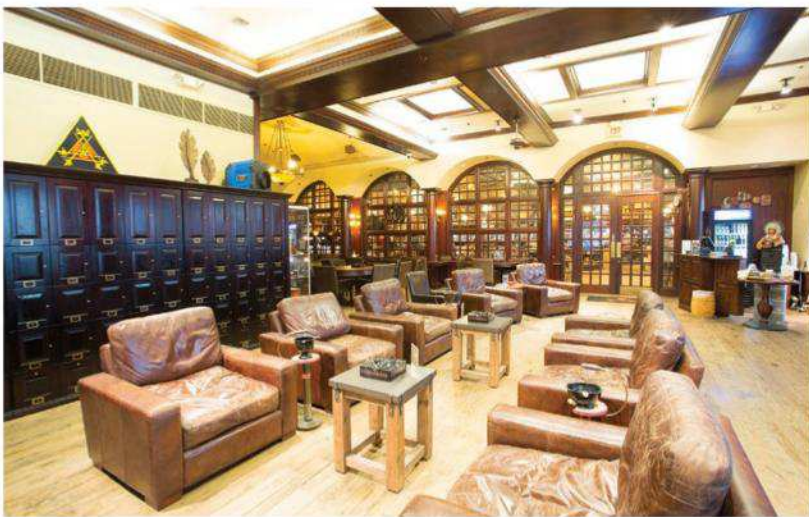
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double coronas

Double coronas are another example of a classic cigar size that aren't as popular as they once were, but if you find the right retailer—and have an hour and a half to smoke the entire cigar—this old standard has a lot to offer. Three scored an outstanding 92 points, and each comes from a different country. The Ashton Aged Maduro No. 60 is made in the Dominican Republic at the Fuente factory from a traditional blend of Dominican tobacco and Connecticut broadleaf wrapper. Though dark and imposing, the cigar is sweet and complex. The Padrón 1964 Anniversary Series “A” is a double corona by our standards. No matter the name, it's a fantastic smoke, full of the signature chocolate characteristic to the vaunted brand. They're made in Nicaragua and stand as a testament to the company's ability to produce a 1964 Anniversary Series cigar of any size and still maintain all its defining traits. There aren't many sizes left in the Cuban Ramon Allones brand, but the Gigante is one of them. It's one of the few double coronas that Habanos S.A. produces. It builds in both complexity and intensity.



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 7 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

ASHTON AGED MADURO NO. 60
An inky, dark Churchill whose every puff is sweet and dense with cocoa powder, molasses, nougat and a caramel finish.
U.S.: \$12.40 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

92



NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 8 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PADRÓN 1964 ANNIVERSARY SERIES “A”
A long cigar with a very flat head. Initial puffs are light and herbal, but this cigar intensifies to show sweet, rich notes of chocolate and vanilla, maraschino cherry, and a toasty, nutty finish redolent of hazelnuts.
U.S.: \$34.10 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

92



CUBA
RING GAUGE: 49 LENGTH: 7 5/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: APRIL 2015

RAMON ALLONES GIGANTES
Tall and dark with a three-seam cap and flat head. Nutty and earthy from the first puff, the cigar becomes progressively stronger and more complex with notes of caramel, almonds and a leathery finish.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £30.02 STRENGTH: Medium

92



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 56 LENGTH: 7 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

E.P. CARRILLO ORIGINAL REBEL MAVERICK 56
A huge, beefy cigar with some up-front, tangy acidity that dissipates for warmer notes of dark chocolate, wood and dried fruit.
U.S.: \$12.60 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

90



CUBA
RING GAUGE: 49 LENGTH: 7 5/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: JUNE 2016

HOYO DE MONTERREY DOUBLE CORONA
This large double corona is made with a three-seam cap and tawny wrapper. The draw is firm but still imparts a nutty, floral smoke that develops notes of toffee and baking spices.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £30.46 STRENGTH: Medium

90

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 7 1/2"

FILLER: NICARAGUA

BINDER: NICARAGUA

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA GLORIA CUBANA COLECCIÓN RESERVA PRESIDENTE

Covered in a streaky, dark wrapper, this large cigar has a spicy, leathery start opening up to show notes of walnut and toast. The finish is light and herbal.

U.S.: \$8.99 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

89

**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 8"

FILLER: NICARAGUA

BINDER: NICARAGUA

WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

OLIVA SERIE G MADURO PRESIDENTE

Sharply box pressed with a maduro wrapper. The draw is open and full, delivering earthy notes, caramel sweetness and a charry, spicy finish.

U.S.: \$7.32 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

89

**HONDURAS**

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 7 1/2"

FILLER: NICARAGUA

BINDER: NICARAGUA

WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

PUNCH GRAN PURO NICARAGUA

7 1/2 X 54

This cigar is a slow starter, but becomes fruity and nutty with tangy hints of cloves and a creamy finish. The draw and burn are even and consistent.

U.S.: \$7.19 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7 1/2"

FILLER: DOM. REP.

BINDER: MEXICO

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ROMEO Y JULIETA VINTAGE V

The medium claro wrapper of this large cigar hints at its medium-bodied notes of citrus, wood and cocoa powder. The finish carries the yeasty hint of bread.

U.S.: \$10.01 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

89

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 7 1/2"

FILLER: DOM. REP.

BINDER: DOM. REP.

WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

DIAMOND CROWN ROBUSTO NO. 2

A large Churchill in a light Connecticut wrapper. It's floral and nutty with some tangy wood and grassy notes on the finish.

U.S.: \$18.45 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild

88

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 7 5/8"

FILLER: DOM. REP.

BINDER: DOM. REP.

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ARTURO FUENTE CHATEAU FUENTE ROYAL SALUTE SUN GROWN

Dark and oily, this double corona smokes evenly, offering the sweet-and-sour qualities of cloves, tamarind and citrus, but the finish leaves a charry aftertaste.

U.S.: \$8.56 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

87

**U.S.A.**

RING GAUGE: 49 LENGTH: 7 5/8"

FILLER: NICARAGUA

BINDER: NICARAGUA

WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

TATUAJE CABINET TAINOS

Big, dark and oily, this cigar shows a combination of sweetness and charry oak on the palate, though the finish leaves the slightly bitter aftertaste of cardboard.

U.S.: \$13.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

86

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7 1/2"

FILLER: DOM. REP.

BINDER: DOM. REP.

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

DAVIDOFF 702 SERIES ANIVERSARIO DOUBLE R

A dark, gleaming double corona whose notes of black pepper, earth and mustard seed clash with its damp, musty undertones.

U.S.: \$36.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

85

figurados

Two small brands from Cuba turned in some big scores. When most people think of Cuban pirámides, the Montecristo No. 2 often comes to mind—but Cuba has more pirámides than just the Monte, and they are vibrant, dynamic representations of Cuban tobacco, even if these cigars aren't quite as popular. Take for example the Diplomaticos No. 2, which scored 92 points. It's almost symphonic in its delivery of flavor, starting light, then building to a crescendo of richness and ending on a sweet note. Or consider the Cuban Vegas Robaina Unico (91 points), named for the legendary farm owned by the Robaina family and still operating today. The brand doesn't necessarily contain tobacco specifically from that farm, but the Unico is a bracing smoke, establishing bold notes up front and then an assortment of secondary flavors. ■ Four figurados scored 90 points: The 601 Blue Label Maduro Torpedo from Nicaragua; the Fonseca Cubano Limitado Belicoso, made in the Dominican Republic; the Nicaraguan La Gran Llave Torpedo; and the Serino Wayfarer 109, both from Nicaragua.



CUBA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: SEPTEMBER 2017

DIPLOMATICOS NO. 2

First puffs of this pirámide are floral and woody, but the cigar becomes rich and sweet with notes of chocolate-covered almonds and honey.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £21.58 STRENGTH: Medium-Full

92



CUBA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: MARCH 2017

VEGAS ROBAINA UNICO

Salty, woody notes drive this torpedo, which also delivers a spicy smoke full of vanilla, cardamom, black pepper and a leathery finish.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £24.86 STRENGTH: Medium

91



NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/8"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

601 BLUE LABEL MADURO TORPEDO

Near-black and box-pressed, this torpedo is earthy and toasty in character with notes of coffee and a charred oak finish.

U.S.: \$8.95 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/4"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

FONSECA CUBANO LIMITADO BELICOSO

Rich and earthy with a pipe-tobacco sweetness, oaky vanilla notes and a hint of caraway seed on the cedary finish.

U.S.: \$8.75 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 56 LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: MEXICO

LA GRAN LLAVE TORPEDO

Nearly perfect in appearance, this belicoso is evenly pressed with a clean wrapper and packed with tobacco. The draw is firm, but still offers floral nutty notes, earth and a peppery finish.

U.S.: \$10.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90

**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

SERINO WAYFARER THE 109

Rolled in a Conde 109 shape, this long belicoso produces an exceptionally white ash. It's a mostly woody smoke with secondary notes of gingerbread and nutmeg.

U.S.: \$8.95 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

90**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 58 LENGTH: 5 7/8"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: MEXICO

**E.P. CARRILLO LA HISTORIA
REGALIAS D'CELIA**

Earthy and smoky like a heavily peated Scotch, this flatly pressed belicoso delivers some sweet floral notes as well.

U.S.: \$11.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA,
BRAZIL, PERU
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

**LA AURORA PREFERIDOS 1903 EDICION
EMERALD PERFECTO**

An almost cartoonish perfecto with big notes of strong, dark-roasted coffee, earth and leather, though the finish is a bit muted and closed.

U.S.: \$21.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

89**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

HERRERA ESTELI PIRAMIDE FINO

An attractive belicoso that draws and burns evenly. It's a predominantly woody smoke complemented by notes of peach tea and a floral finish.

U.S.: \$10.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

88**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: COSTA RICA, NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

**NAT SHERMAN PANAMERICANA
BELICOSO FINO**

Notably tangy throughout with hints of fruit, spice and malt. It's a delightfully oily belicoso with a pointy tip.

U.S.: \$11.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

88**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: MEXICO
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

VILLIGER 1888 TORPEDO

Oils are seeping through the wrapper of this torpedo. The draw is weak, imparting a thin smoke that's cedary and herbal with a straw-and-hay finish.

U.S.: \$7.56 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

88**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

**NAT CICCO ANIVERSARIO 1965
LIGA NO. 4 TORPEDO**

Sharply pressed with an uncut foot, this belicoso is tangy and tart with an underlying woodiness, a hint of ginger and charcoal finish.

U.S.: \$6.25 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

87**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

AGING ROOM QUATTRO F59 MAESTRO

A box-pressed belicoso with an herbal, woody smoke that pairs hints of earth and maple, though the finish is a bit soapy.

U.S.: \$10.54 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

86

panetelas

Panetelas and lanceros are often lauded for their sleek elegance, but make no mistake—these slim cigars can be as strong and impactful as they are refined. If you look at the two top-scoring sizes in this category, you'll see two key themes: concentration and intensity. Because of the lancero's thin ring gauge, the smoke from the draw is quite concentrated, hitting the palate squarely in the middle. This can result in an intense smoking experience. It certainly did for the My Father No. 4 Lancero, which scored 91 points. The cigar is made in Nicaragua at the Garcia family's My Father Cigars Factory. Another Nicaraguan cigar, the Oliva Serie V Lancero, also scored 91 points. Both cigars are studies in concentrated complexity that maintain the grace you'd expect from a long, thin smoke.



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MY FATHER NO. 4 LANCERO

A gleaming lancero with a pigtail cap and perfect draw. Concentrated notes of leather, fruit and spice intensify for a bold, resonant finish.

U.S.: \$10.10 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

91



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

OLIVA SERIE V LANCERO

A dark lancero that's as delicious as it looks. Each puff calls to mind cloves, maple, brown sugar and ripe fruits. The smoke intensifies to show heavier notes of coffee bean and a spicy finish.

U.S.: \$7.84 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

91



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 6 7/8"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA AURORA 107 LANCERO

The tobacco in this dark, streaky lance captures the essence of dark-roasted coffee beans buttressed by a rich earthiness, a touch of chocolate and a leathery finish.

U.S.: \$7.76 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA
BINDER: BRAZIL
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. HABANO

LIGA PRIVADA ÚNICO SERIE L-40

Cloaked in a dark, toothy wrapper this lancero gives dense, chewy notes of gingerbread, earth and nuts before a woody, mesquite finish.

U.S.: \$16.53 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

JOYA DE NICARAGUA ANTAÑO 1970 LANCERO

Dried fruit on the cold draw of this dark lancero recurs once the cigar is lit, along with notes of cocoa powder and candy-coated Jordan almonds.

U.S.: \$8.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA BARBA PURPLE 40 X 7

Oily and alluring with a reddish tinge to the wrapper and slight resistance on the draw. It's earthy, mineral qualities are matched with fruit notes and a hint of maple sweetness.

U.S.: \$8.90 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

89**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 36 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

**ROMEO Y JULIETA RESERVA REAL
PORTO REAL**

First impressions of this slim cigar are dry and herbal, but it picks up some notes of pepper and cocoa powder. The draw is inconsistent.

U.S.: \$7.92 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

88**U.S.A.**

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 7 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

**CASA FERNANDEZ ANIVERSARIO
SERIE 2015 VOLEUR**

A long, slim, box-pressed lancero with an open draw. Though bland at first, it becomes a tangy smoke with a mineral-like finish.

U.S.: \$12.70 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

87**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 7 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

KRISTOFF CRIOLLO LANCERO

A rustic-looking lancero with an uncut foot and pigtail cap. Herbal and woody at first, it becomes stronger with earth and a heavy mineral finish.

U.S.: \$8.20 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

87**U.S.A.**

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA PALINA ILLUMINATION LANCERO

The wrapper of this lancero has a healthy, rich color. Its creamy notes of vanilla and oak contrast with zesty hints of lemon and licorice.

U.S.: \$11.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

87**CUBA**

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 7 1/2"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: MARCH 2015

TRINIDAD FUNDADORES

A slim smoke with a veiny wrapper and tight pigtail cap. It draws well, though the burn is a bit uneven. Initial flintiness dissipates to show notes of nutmeg, ground pepper and a saccharine sweetness.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £24.00 STRENGTH: Medium

87**NICARAGUA**

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

**L'ATELIER SELECTION SPÉCIALE
LAT 38 SPECIAL**

A near-black lancero whose notes of earth, citrus and minerals clash a bit with hints of toast and the boozy-tasting finish.

U.S.: \$9.75 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

86

robustos

The Cuban Juan Lopez Selección No. 2 may seem like a supporting cast member when it comes to Habanos S.A.'s overall production of Cuban brands, but in this tasting, it turned in a leading performance scoring 92 points. It hit all the sweet and savory notes in both sporting and artful ways. Take note of its core cedary character. These cigars are boxed in cedar cabinets, which, no doubt impart some woodiness to the smoke. Two cigars scored 91 points, the Nicaraguan My Father La Oportunidad Robusto and the Cuban Romeo y Julieta Wide Churchill. Both reflect modern tastes—the My Father with its popular Mexican-Nicaraguan blend and the Romeo with its sheer girth.



CUBA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 7/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: NOVEMBER 2017

JUAN LOPEZ SELECCIÓN NO. 2

Rich notes of leather, nuts and chocolate play beautifully off of this cigar's spicy, cedary core for a well-balanced and delicious smoke.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £19.13 STRENGTH: Medium-Full

92



NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: MEXICO

MY FATHER LA OPULENCIA ROBUSTO

A dark-brown robusto with rounded shoulders and even combustion. Its predominant chocolate character is underscored by notes of coffee bean and nuts.

U.S.: \$10.10 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

91



CUBA
RING GAUGE: 55 LENGTH: 5 1/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: JULY 2017

ROMEO Y JULIETA WIDE CHURCHILL

A fat robusto topped with an uneven three-seam cap. There's an underlying toastiness to this smoke, which is well layered with notes of spice, fruit and leather.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £25.38 STRENGTH: Medium

91



HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

ALEC BRADLEY THE LINEAGE ROBUSTO

Topped with a pigtail cap, this robusto smokes evenly with a clean burn and full draw. It's a toasty, creamy smoke with some salty elements, a bit of earth and a toffee sweetness.

U.S.: \$7.55 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

LA FLOR DOMINICANA COLORADO OSCURO NO. 4

Oils are seeping through the wrapper of this dark cigar, which shows a rich interplay of chocolate, cinnamon and bread dough along with some hints of licorice.

U.S.: \$8.40 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



CUBA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 7/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: FEBRUARY 2017

RAMON ALLONES SPECIALLY SELECTED

There's a nutty, oaky core to this lightly hued robusto. Notes of spicy clove and earth emerge, followed by an earthy finish.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £18.59 STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA,
U.S.A./PENN. BROADLEAF
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: MEXICO

MATILDE OSCURA ROBUSTO

An oily maduro with a round head and open draw. It's a nutty, cedary smoke with an underlying earthiness and an herbal finish.

U.S.: \$8.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

PADILLA MIAMI 8&11 ROBUSTO

Neatly rolled and solid with an oily wrapper. This is a zesty robusto full of citrus notes, ground cloves and a toasty finish.

U.S.: \$12.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PADRÓN 2000 MADURO

The nutty, earthy core of this dark robusto is balanced by notes maple sugar and ground chili pepper before a woody finish.

U.S.: \$6.10 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

TRINIDAD SANTIAGO ROBUSTO

A dark, oily robusto with a full draw but uneven burn. Notes of leather and earth precede sweeter touches of cocoa powder and nuts, but the finish is a bit sharp.

U.S.: \$8.90 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

ARTURO FUENTE AÑEJO RESERVA NO. 50

The dense smoke of this dark robusto combines the sweet elements of dark chocolate with the tanginess of dried orange peel. The finish is earthy.

U.S.: \$10.79 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

88



U.S.A.

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

CORNELIUS & ANTHONY CORNELIUS ROBUSTO

A woody-tasting robusto with intermittent notes of cocoa and nougat that precede the earthy finish. The draw is a bit firm, but the burn is even.

U.S.: \$14.20 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

87



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

DAVIDOFF NICARAGUA ROBUSTO (TUBO)

The draw of this attractive robusto is a bit firm, but imparts the sweet and chewy notes of almond-studded nougat and honey, but the finish is dry.

U.S.: \$15.90 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

87



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 4 3/4"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: DECEMBER 2017

PUNCH REGIOS DE PUNCH EDICIÓN LIMITADA 2017

This small cigar produces a dark, flaky ash as it burns. Hints of pepper and oak are dominated by mineral characteristics and chemical notes. The finish is bitter.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £23.70 STRENGTH: Medium-Full

84

buying guide

TOP SCORES, VALUES AND STRENGTH | BLIND TASTE TEST NO. 145

TOP SCORES



94 H. Upmann Sir Winston
Cuba • £32.91 • Churchill • Medium



93 The Wise Man Maduro Robusto
Nicaragua • \$10.50 • Corona Gorda • Medium-Full



93 Vegas Cubanas Generosos
Nicaragua • \$7.18 • Corona Gorda • Medium



92 Alec Bradley Black Market Estelí Churchill
Nicaragua • \$8.75 • Churchill • Medium-Full



92 Ashton Aged Maduro No. 60
Dominican Republic • \$12.40 • Double Corona • Medium



92 Diplomaticos No. 2
Cuba • £21.58 • Figurado • Medium-Full



92 Juan Lopez Selección No. 2
Cuba • £19.13 • Robusto • Medium-Full



92 Padrón 1964 Anniversary Series "A"
Nicaragua • \$34.10 • Double Corona • Medium-Full



92 Ramon Allones Gigantes
Cuba • £30.02 • Double Corona • Medium

TOP VALUES



90 Gilberto Oliva Reserva 6x50
Nicaragua • \$6.10 • Corona Gorda • Medium



89 Oliva Serie G Maduro Presidente
Nicaragua • \$7.32 • Double Corona • Medium



89 Padrón 2000 Maduro
Nicaragua • \$6.10 • Robusto • Medium-Full



89 Punch Gran Puro Nicaragua 7 1/2 x 54
Honduras • \$7.19 • Double Corona • Medium-Full



87 Macanudo Inspirado Red Toro
Nicaragua • \$6.99 • Corona Gorda • Medium-Full



87 Nat Cicco Aniversario 1965 Liga No. 4 Torpedo
Nicaragua • \$6.25 • Figurado • Medium

MILDER CIGARS

89 Casa Magna Jalapa Claro Toro Box Press
Nicaragua • \$7.20 • Corona Gorda • Mild-Medium

89 Undercrown Shade Corona Doble
Nicaragua • \$9.98 • Churchill • Mild

88 Diamond Crown Robusto No. 2
Dominican Republic • \$18.45 • Double Corona • Mild

88 Padrón Dámaso No. 17
Nicaragua • \$17.50 • Churchill • Mild

88 Romeo y Julieta Reserva Real Porto Real
Dominican Republic • \$7.92 • Panetela • Mild-Medium

MEDIUM-BODIED CIGARS

91 Avo Maduro 30 Years No. 2
Dominican Republic • \$10.50 • Corona Gorda • Medium

91 Rocky Patel Vintage 1990 Churchill
Honduras • \$10.10 • Churchill • Medium

91 Romeo y Julieta Wide Churchill
Cuba • £25.38 • Robusto • Medium

91 San Lotano Requiem Connecticut Churchill
Nicaragua • \$7.80 • Churchill • Medium

91 Vegas Robaina Unico
Cuba • £24.86 • Figurado • Medium

STRONGER SMOKES

91 Micallef Reserva Limitada Privada
Nicaragua • \$42.00 • Churchill • Medium-Full

91 My Father La Opulencia Robusto
Nicaragua • \$10.10 • Robusto • Full

90 601 Blue Label Maduro Torpedo
Nicaragua • \$8.95 • Figurado • Medium-Full

90 La Flor Dominicana Colorado Oscuro No. 4
Dominican Republic • \$8.40 • Robusto • Medium-Full

90 Ramon Allones Specially Selected
Cuba • £18.59 • Robusto • Medium-Full

CIGAR AFICIONADO'S
100-POINT SCALE

Classic 95–100 • Outstanding 90–94 • Very good to excellent 80–89 • Average to good commercial quality 70–79
Don't waste your money 0–69 • Not available N/A • Note: all prices are manufacturers' suggested retail, before taxes.

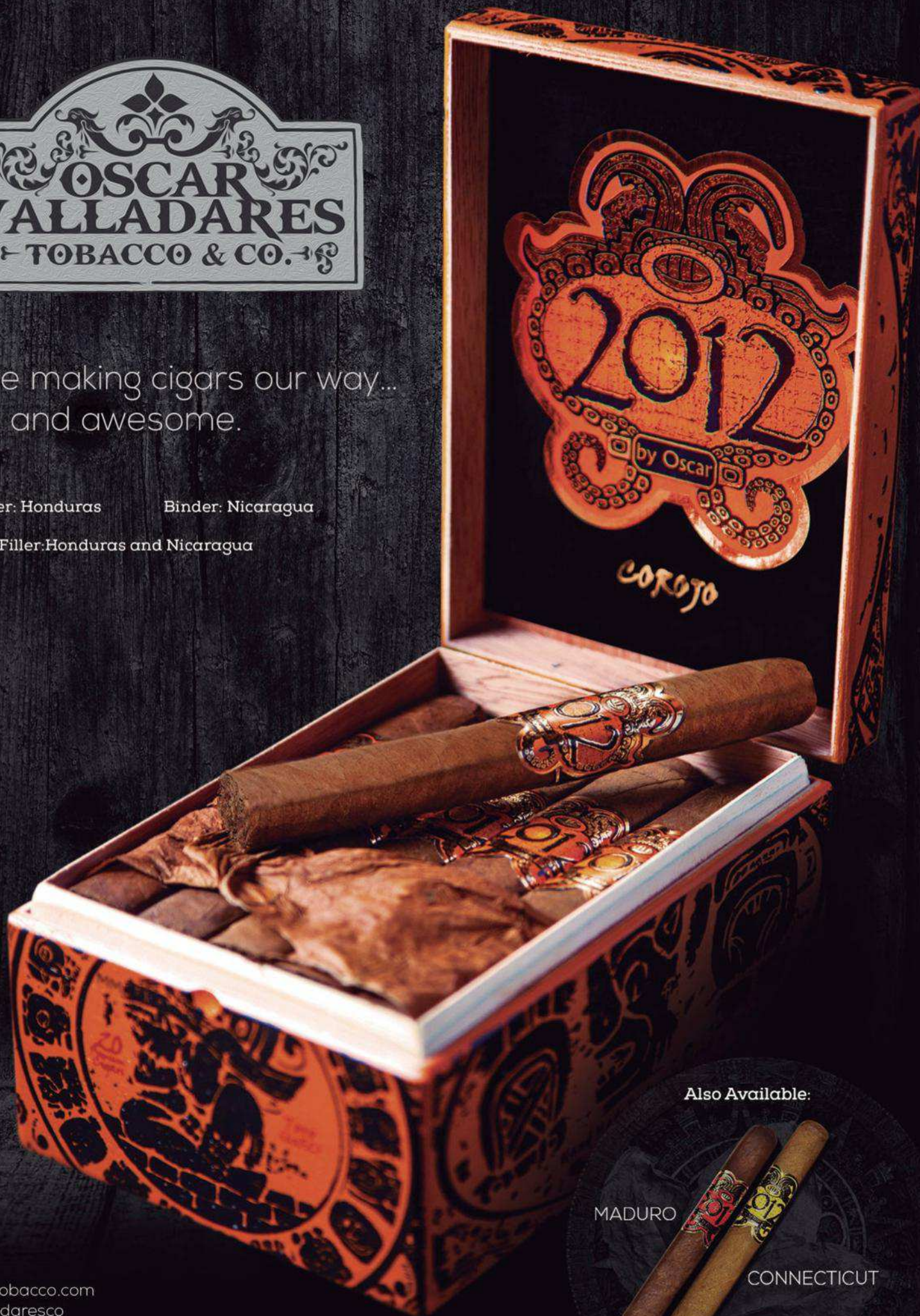


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Binder: Nicaragua

Filler: Honduras and Nicaragua



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100 HOYO DE MONTERREY DOUBLE CORONA (1991)

When you think of superb, big cigars, this one immediately comes to mind, for Hoyo Double Coronas are a benchmark for that Cuban size, which also goes by the name prominente. The wrapper on this large cigar—it measures 7 5/8 inches long, with a 49 ring gauge—is the texture of fine silk, the edges of the cigar squared just so. Everything about it is perfect, from the draw to the flavor. It's brimming with character, with unbelievable amounts of chestnuts, walnuts and cinnamon that left me speechless. A flawless smoke. —*Marvin R. Shanken*

JEFF HARRIS



98 PUNCH NÉCTARES NO. 5 (1974)

This is a near-perfect corona. The wrapper is reddish brown, and covered with streaks of dark brown oils. The first attack brings a sweet cedar note, and that quickly shifts to wood and dark cocoa powder flavors. The finish ends with a sweet leathery note that lingers on the palate. At its peak, but there is life left in this 44-year-old smoke. —*Gordon Mott*



97 BOLIVAR INMENSAS (1995)

This long, rather skinny smoke falls into our lonsdale category, and more than two decades in a dress box has left it rather squared on the sides. The burn is not quite even, but the flavor is big, with touches of black pepper, tropical fruit and a sweetness reminiscent of a chocolate malted milkshake. The finish is long and luxurious, and the balanced smoke gets better with each puff. —*David Savona*



96 HOYO DE MONTERREY EPICURE NO. 1

This cigar (circa early '80s), taken from a cabinet of 50, displays all the characteristics of a well-aged smoke. Stored from its arrival at James Fox tobacconist in Dublin, the cigar has a solid core of cedar flavors, with a touch of white pepper on the mid-palate, and finally, a hint of dry leather on the smooth, long finish. It still has plenty of life in its future, but it's smoking perfectly right now. —*Gordon Mott*

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112 and Feeling Fine

The oldest man in America smokes cigars every day

The oldest man in the United States, Richard A. Overton, turned 112 on May 11, and he celebrated that momentous day like he does any other—by smoking cigars.

“I’m happy every day,” he said while puffing a cigar in his home in East Austin, Texas, on his birthday. It was 2:30 in the afternoon, and he was already on cigar number six. “I don’t have no worries. I feel fine—I ain’t got no aches, pains or nothing.”

Overton smokes cigars every day, and likes them mild. He smoked his first cigar in 1924, when he was 18. His regular brand is a Tampa Sweet. “I smoke 12 a day,” he says, “but I don’t inhale them. It’s the good taste. Let your lungs stay clean.”

Overton not only loves his cigars, but he has a taste for

whiskey. “You put a taste of whiskey in your coffee in the morning,” he advises. “It’s like medicine.”

Overton was born in St. Mary’s Colony, Texas, in 1906. The Dow Jones would break 100 for the first time that year, newspapers sold for a penny apiece and man had flown for a mere three years. Overton joined the U.S. Army during World War II, and his service took him to the South Pacific, where the United States fought some of its bloodiest battles. His boots hit the beaches of Guam, Palau and Iwo Jima, and he survived the war uninjured.

Light a cigar and raise your glass to Mr. Overton, America’s oldest man—and oldest cigar aficionado.

—David Savona



A Half Century of Joya

Joya de Nicaragua is steeped in history, and the people behind the brand have their eyes on the future

BY DAVID CLOUGH PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER GARRITANO

“The guards are superstitious at night,” says Juan Martínez. The president of Joya de Nicaragua is standing in a cavernous back hallway on the first floor of his company’s cigar factory in Estelí, Nicaragua. He explains that the guards who patrol the grounds at night claim to see restless spirits, the ghosts of factory workers slain during the Nicaraguan revolution.

Martínez, a lean 35-year-old, points down the hallway. “During the revolution, the wall back there, the wall of the bathroom, was used by a firing squad. The National Guard came in and conducted executions, killing those suspected of being guerrillas.”

That was the end of the 1970s, when the Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza tried—and failed—to crush the Sandinista revolution. He ordered his men to bomb Estelí, and the Joya de Nicaragua factory was hit in the strike. Soldiers arrived shortly after, marching through the rubble and debris in search of guerrilla fighters. They entered the factory with their weapons loaded. Suspected dissidents were ripped from their work stations, forced against a wall. A volley of gunfire, and then it was quiet.

Bombardment and bloodshed did not bring an end to Nicaragua’s oldest cigar brand. The factory endured the war, and a five-year-embargo banning Nicaraguan goods from America. This year, Joya de Nicaragua celebrates its 50th anniversary.

Martínez heads to a brightly lit conference room where his father, Dr. Alejandro Martínez Cuenca, sits smoking a cigar. Cuenca, 71, acquired the factory in the early ’90s and has remained at the helm of the company ever since.

“Joya de Nicaragua is now 50 years old,” Cuenca says. “It’s the oldest commercial premium cigar brand in Nicaragua. Everything starts from here. It’s a moment in history. Joya was the start of the development of the manufacture of premium cigars in Nicaragua. We feel very proud of that.”

The Joya de Nicaragua cigar brand was created in 1968 by Juan Francisco Bermejo and Simón Camacho, the founders of Nicaragua Cigar Co., which operated out of a small factory in downtown Estelí. In the early 1970s, the brand prospered and became a commercial success in the United States.

“The early years were a golden period for Joya de Nicaragua,” Cuenca says. He puffs his cigar and sends a billowing plume of smoke into the air. “In 1971, Joya de

The father-son team behind Joya de Nicaragua: Dr. Alejandro Martínez Cuenca (right) and his son Juan Martínez.



Nicaragua was named the official cigar of the White House, that's how popular it was."

But the brand's international success also attracted the attention of Somoza, who strong-armed control of Nicaragua Cigar Co. away from the original owners. Under Somoza's watch, the brand continued to grow in popularity. Between 1976 and 1978 the factory was producing 9.2 million Joya de Nicaragua cigars a year. Demand grew so rapidly that Somoza moved production of the cigar to a larger factory—the massive brick building it calls home to this day.

But in 1978, Nicaraguan civil unrest and rising tensions between Somoza and an opposing political faction called the Sandinista National Liberation Front reached a boiling point. There were riots in the streets. Somoza bombed his own cities. M4 Sherman tanks rolled through the wreckage of broken buildings and helicopters circled the smoke-filled skies. Violent protesters set fire to Somoza-owned businesses, including the Joya de Nicaragua factory.

"The city was bombed. Buildings were destroyed," Cuenca says, his piercing blue eyes intent on his questioner. "Some of the National Guard who were defending the government stationed themselves in this place, so it became a target of attack from all fronts." He taps the end of his cigar in a nearby ashtray. "This place was burned to pieces. It burned to the ground in 1978."

Less than a year later, Somoza lost control of the country and fled Nicaragua, abandoning his people and his military. He was later

assassinated in Paraguay by a squad of Sandinista commandos. The newly formed Sandinista government took control of Nicaragua and the workers of Nicaragua Cigar Co. rebuilt their damaged factory—but with no figurehead to lead the business, the company struggled. "In the 1980s, the company was nationalized and the workers took over. But they could not run the company. They could not sell cigars," Cuenca says. "They knew about tobaccos, they could make a cigar, but they could not sell it."

To make matters worse, it became impossible for Nicaragua Cigar Co. to market its cigars in the United States due to a nationwide ban on all Nicaraguan imports. In an effort to undermine the newly formed Sandinista government, the U.S. imposed an embargo against Nicaragua in 1985, prohibiting all trade between the two countries until it was lifted in 1990. During those years, Nicaragua Cigar Co. sold its Joya cigars elsewhere, planting a strong foothold in the European market that persists to this day.

"Because of the embargo, we couldn't sell Joya in the United States, so we were selling in Europe and Asia. We had to diversify," Martínez explains. "That's one of the reasons why, today, we're one of the most international cigar brands from Nicaragua. For most of the cigar industry, 80 up to 90 percent of the production goes to the United States. For us, it's a little bit less than 50 percent. Right now we're in 53 countries... Spain, Switzerland, Poland, Germany and Russia have been historically strong for us."

Despite the brisk sales to Europe, Joya de Nicaragua struggled financially during the '80s and the early '90s. It missed selling cigars to the U.S., the world's largest cigar market. Representatives from the factory reached out for assistance to Alejandro Martínez Cuenca, who was governor of Nicaragua's Central Bank at the time. Cuenca saw a future for the struggling company.

"I am a Nicaraguan. I was born in Nicaragua. My area of concentration has always been economics but I became very familiar with the tobacco industry from a very young age," Cuenca says. "In terms of production of tobacco and knowledge of tobacco, it came after I decided to invest in this company back in 1993. When I noticed it was a company that had promise. Potential. Basically, because of the people that were working here."

Cuenca's Tabacos Puros de Nicaragua rented, then took over, Nicaragua Cigar Co. in 1994. By that time, the Nicaraguan embargo was over, and Cuenca knew it was essential for the company to

Tabacalera Cigars International had acquired Hollco-Rohr, and with it, the U.S. Joya de Nicaragua trademark. (Through a series of mergers and acquisitions, Tabacalera would one day merge with France's SEITA and become Altadis S.A., which makes non-Cuban Montecristos and Romeo y Julietas under its U.S. subsidiary.) Cuenca acquired the brand in 1998, and finally, the Joya de Nicaragua trademark was back with his company.

Business began to pick up. Buoyed by strong sales during the late '90s, Cuenca set his sights on introducing a new cigar blend, a Nicaraguan puro that would honor the legacy of original Joya de Nicaraguas while setting the standard for a powerful, full-bodied cigar. In 2001, the company launched Joya de Nicaragua Antaño 1970. "It was a big chance for us. The blend was something we had never had before: A full-bodied cigar," Cuenca says. "We wanted something strong, a puro, a full Nicaraguan cigar—so everybody would be clear what a full-bodied cigar was. To create a benchmark for what a full-bodied cigar should be. That was our target. And that was Antaño."

The name of the cigar was a homage to the golden years of the company. Those bright, few years during the 1970s before the hardships began.

"The name itself means 'yesteryear,'" Cuenca says. "As in, to remember the past in a nostalgic way, remembering the years of success in the 1970s. It was an important time for the brand."

The cigar was a triumph for the company. A growing demand for Nicaraguan cigars, and in particular fuller-bodied cigars, propelled Antaño to critical acclaim. In the December 2011 CIGAR AFICIONADO, the Antaño Machito, a small cigar packed with muscle-bound tobacco, scored 92 points.

In the coming years, the American obsession with powerhouse smokes from Nicaragua would only continue to grow, allowing many new cigar companies

to take root and expand in Nicaragua.

Throughout the 2000s, the proliferation of new cigar companies entering Nicaragua, as well as increased demand for fuller-bodied cigars, led manufacturers to roll increasingly stronger, spicier smokes. Cuenca admits that, by today's standards, Antaño 1970 would no longer be considered the strongest cigar on the market, but feels it was instrumental in starting a trend that persists to this day, and strengthened Nicaragua's cigar industry overall.

"After Antaño, there was the race up in terms of strength. It's no longer the fullest cigar on the market just because the bar has risen."

In 2009, Tabacos Puros de Nicaragua was renamed Joya de Nicaragua, to better align the company with its flagship brands. Shortly after, Juan Martínez, Cuenca's son, began to take a more active role in the company, and in 2013 he was named Cuenca's right hand man, taking on the role of president at Joya de Nicaragua. Tasked with driving the company forward into a new era, Martínez spearheaded the launch of the modernized Joya cigar brands. First Joya Red was introduced in 2014, followed by Joya Black in 2016.

"The Joya family of cigar brands is meant to appeal to a new generation of cigar smokers," Martínez says. "We wanted to overcome two perceptions in the U.S. marketplace—One, that Joya de Nicaragua only makes one type of cigar, a full-bodied cigar. And



The main rolling room at Joya de Nicaragua, a brand that was first made 50 years ago.

reenter the U.S. market. But there was a big problem. The dictator Somoza had left a dagger in the back of Joya de Nicaragua.

Before he fled the country, Somoza sold the trademark for Joya de Nicaragua to an American company called Oppenheimer & Co. Oppenheimer found a different business partner to make Joya de Nicaragua cigars for them—one based in Honduras. It sounds bizarre, but during the 1980s, Joya de Nicaragua—the Nicaraguan puro whose name translates to "The Jewel of Nicaragua"—was being rolled in a different country with an entirely different blend of tobaccos.

"At the time, this company had no knowledge that in the United States there were cigars being sold with the name Joya de Nicaragua manufactured in Honduras," Cuenca says. "So my task was—once I decided to buy the company in 1994, after I had been running it for a year under a contract of rental of the facility—to get together with those that owned the trademark and try to negotiate an agreement." In 1994, he met with executives from Hollco-Rohr, a company that had acquired the U.S. distribution rights to Joya from Oppenheimer. Cuenca made a deal, and the Joya factory was once again able to produce Joya de Nicaragua cigars for the U.S. But Cuenca wasn't finished. He wanted to buy back the U.S. trademark and bring it home, where it belonged. But he would have to negotiate with yet another company.

Nicaragua Is No. 1

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA

After years of steady growth and increased demand for its hearty, distinct tobacco, Nicaragua has become the largest exporter of handmade cigars to the United States. Last year, the country shipped a little more than 148 million premium cigars to the U.S. market.

For years, the reigning leader in premium cigar exports had been the Dominican Republic, but America's huge, growing appetite for Nicaraguan cigars eventually sent the Dominican Republic to second place, by about 30 million cigars.

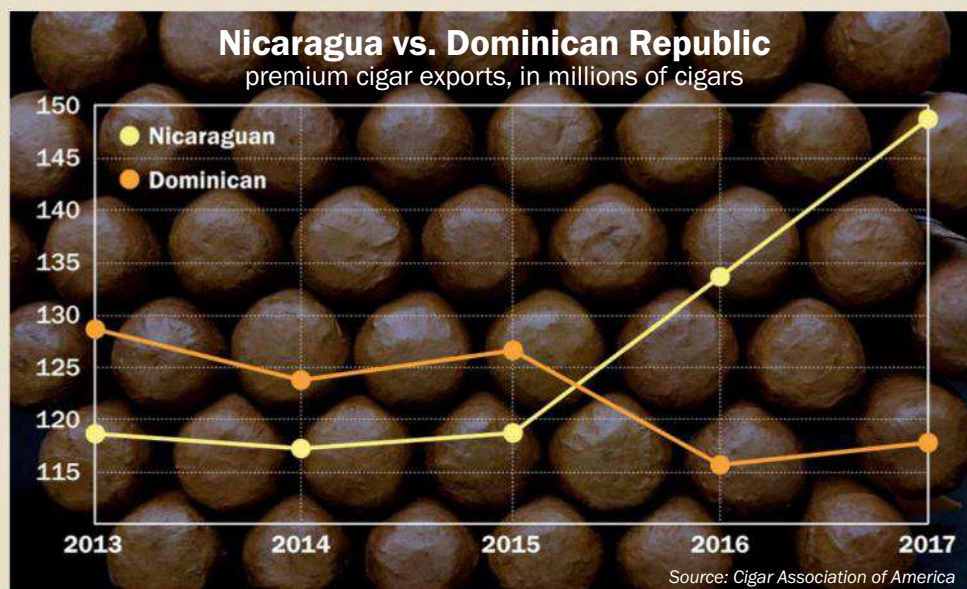
Today's cigar shops in America are loaded with cigars from Nicaraguan brands such as Padrón, My Father, Joya de Nicaragua, Oliva, A.J. Fernandez and Rocky Patel.

Nicaragua's new position of prominence is especially impressive when you consider the fact that the Central American country wasn't even a factor not too long ago. Consider its tumultuous history. Nicaraguan products were banned from the U.S. due to an embargo from 1985 to March 1990, and war ravaged the country. As a result, the nation exported fewer than 1 million cigars annually to the U.S. between 1991 and 1995.

By 2000, Nicaragua had pulled into third place, but still trailed far behind Honduras and even further behind the Dominican Republic. As infrastructure in Nicaragua improved, so did its tobacco, and consequently, its cigars. Smokers took notice, as did CIGAR AFICIONADO, which has named a Nicaraguan smoke the Cigar of the Year seven times—more than any other country.

Padrón Cigars has played a major role in elevating the status for Nicaraguan cigars, and the company has won the Cigar of the Year accolade a record three times.

There were some ups and downs from 1997 to 2003, but Nicaragua's growth since 2004 has been, for the most part, steady. There



were a few notable spikes in production—one in 2008 (up 22 percent), one in 2011 (an 18.7 percent increase) and a 15 percent increase in 2013, to nearly 119 million cigars.

Nicaragua's rise to prominence does not surprise Nestor Andrés Plasencia. His family-owned company, Plasencia Tobacco, is one of the largest growers of tobacco in Nicaragua and a major producer of cigars. "I think that U.S. consumers love the unique taste of Nicaraguan tobacco," he says. "In our factories, we grew 32 percent from 2016 to 2017. And in Nicaragua, we have the perfect soil for growing the tobacco. Also, the perfect microclimate—humidity, temperature and sunlight."

Nicaragua's No. 1 spot shouldn't be a surprise to anyone who's visited Estelí lately. It's the central city for the Nicaraguan cigar industry, located about 92 miles from the capital, and is clearly experiencing an economic boom. New cigar factories are opening up, existing cigar factories are nearing or reaching capacity and

the Pan-American highway, which cuts right through Estelí, is jammed with unprecedented amounts of traffic.

Even the recent political unrest has not deterred the cigar industry. The country erupted in April when President Daniel Ortega announced a tax increase and an overhaul to Nicaragua's social security system. While most of the protesting took place in the capital city of Managua, some of the violence spread to Estelí. However, the cigar industry remained focused and mostly unaffected.

"The people of Nicaragua have been working very hard to achieve this position," says Dr. Alejandro Martínez Cuenca, the owner and chairman of Joya de Nicaragua. "Ten years of work cannot be destroyed in one day."

In 2017, the United States imported a total of 330 million premium cigars. Nicaragua currently controls 45 percent of that number. It's an impressive lead—and one the country's cigarmakers intend to keep. ♦

two, that Joya is considered an old-school brand. We wanted to make it exciting again for the contemporary smoker."

Last year, the Joya Black Nocturno ranked No. 22 on CIGAR AFICIONADO's Top 25 Cigars of the Year list. And this year, at the International Premium Cigar and Pipe Retailers trade show, the company plans to introduce the Joya de Nicaragua Cinco Decadas, a cigar meant to commemorate Joya's 50th anniversary.

"We wanted to celebrate this 50 years with a note of optimism to the industry. A realization that what we have achieved both as a company and as an industry is a story to be told," Cuenca says.

Martínez leaves his father's side and takes a staircase up to the second floor of the cigar factory. The rolling gallery. A dull murmur of hands crafting cigars, 68 pairs of rollers working tobacco leaves. Sunlight drifts through the windows at the front of the factory, falling on the shoulders of the workers seated there. It's a scene far removed from the company's turbulent past,

but there are still traces of it here and there. Bullet holes in the front wall of the factory. Scars in the floor where a bomb ripped through the concrete.

"We left some of the evidence behind," Martínez says. "To remember. It's part of our history."

The past is never really dead at Joya de Nicaragua. It's built into the identity of the cigar brands, it's etched into the walls of the factory. And late at night, after the factory workers have gone home, history seems to come alive again, if only for a moment, when the guards take up their posts, their superstitions running wild. Recently, they have reported hearing unexplainable noises. In the dark and quiet halls they have heard the echo of chavetas scraping against each other, the quick strike of metal on metal, only to turn around and see nothing there—an empty cigar rolling table. A wooden chair. Pale moonlight slanting through the windows on the cold concrete floor. ♦

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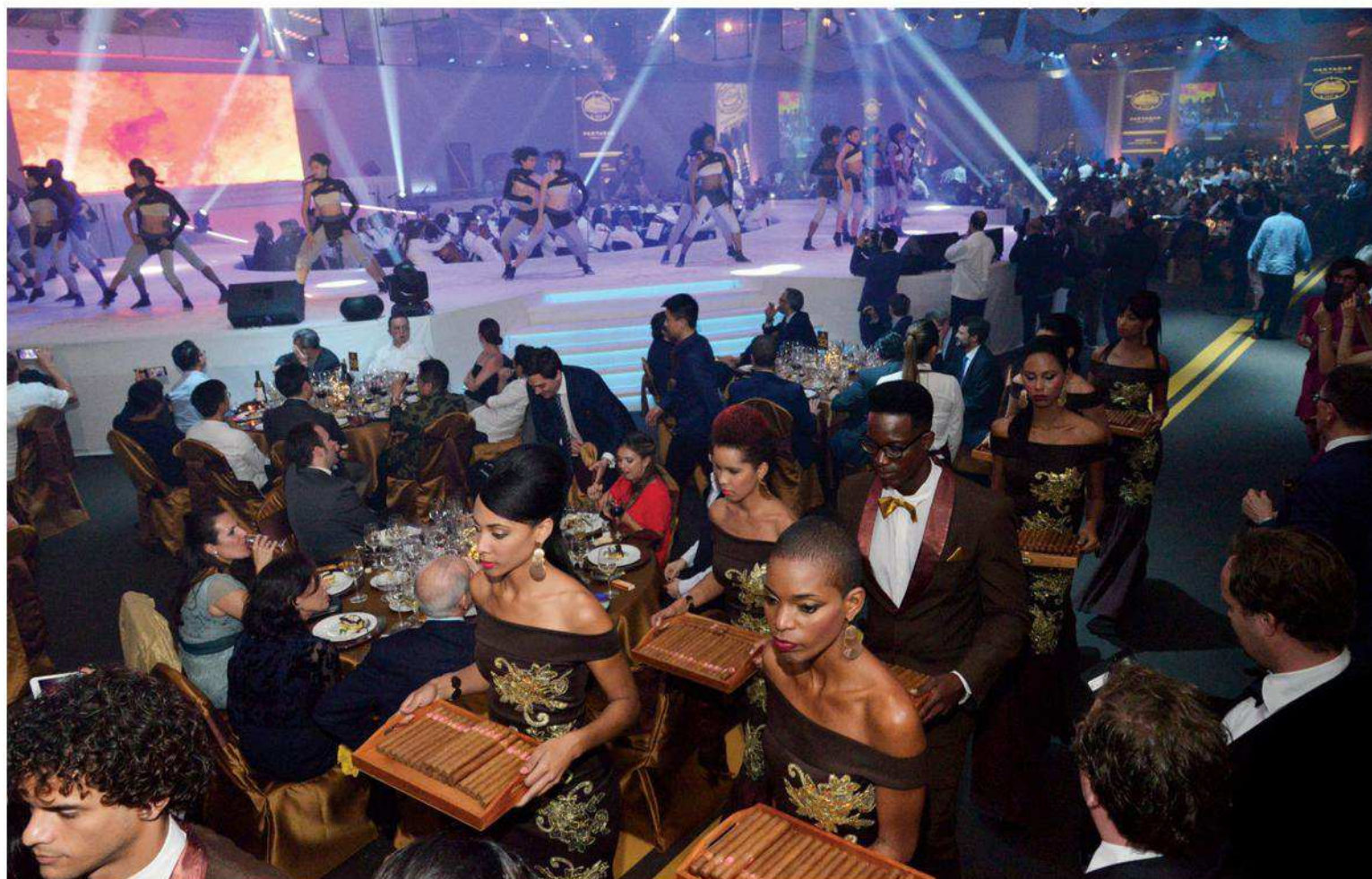
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Two Decades of the Habanos Festival

Cigar lovers from all over the world gathered in Havana to celebrate 20 years of great smokes BY GORDON MOTT



Cigars abounded at the gala dinner capping the 20th Habanos Festival. More than 2,000 were at the festival, and 1,200 attended the final evening.

The line of taxis, old Russian Lada limos and vintage American-made convertibles inched down the drive-through portico of PabExpo, the big hall hosting the closing gala dinner for the Festival del Habano. Male guests in tuxedos and formal guayaberas and women in dresses, gowns and kimonos walked the red carpet into the reception area where statuesque models handed out roses and goodie bags filled with Partagás cigars.

Inside the giant, 400-yard-long hall was a sea of Cuban cigar industry luminaries, cigar retailers and fans of Cuban cigars. Fernando Domínguez, the premium cigar director of Imperial Brands was there, as was Alison Cooper, the CEO of Imperial Brands from the United Kingdom. At one table was Hirochi Robaina, one of Cuba's top tobacco growers, and at another,

José María Cases, Andorra's cigar king.

In the background, the Cuban National Radio and Television Orchestra played jazzy standards as the crowd of more than 1,200 found their way to seats at the maze of tables placed around the circular stage, flanked by floor-to-ceiling posters of the Partagás brand.

The gala culminated a week like no other in the world of cigars, the annual Festival del Habano. The 2018 edition concluded on March 2, and it marked the event's 20th anniversary. More than 2,000 people registered (there were 200 journalists alone), and they came from all corners of the cigar universe: cigar company executives, Habanos distributors, cigar shop owners and hundreds of consumers, many of them guests of the big cigar distributors.

“It is the most international of all the festivals I’ve been to. I’m meeting people from China, Dortmund, Britain. And the common denominator is that everyone loves cigars.”

“It is the greatest celebration of Habanos cigars in the world. It is probably the greatest celebration of cigars anywhere,” said Jemma Freeman, the managing director of Hunters & Frankau in the United Kingdom. “It’s a very intensive week but it’s a perfect combination, learn something new, see something new, see friends, meet new people. That’s why we come.”

“It’s the best cigar festival in the world,” said Max Gutmann, the Habanos distributor in Mexico. “Nowhere else can you get people from all over the world to enjoy cigars with all the other cigar aficionados.”



Hamed Abouzahr from Peru, looking over some of the Cohiba cigars that came with the humidor he won at the gala dinner with a \$418,000 bid.

Cigars remain the festival’s biggest attraction, and this year didn’t disappoint. The headliner was a Cohiba Robusto Reserva Cosecha 2014, a 5-inch-by-50-ring limited edition. Another special release, the Romeo y Julieta Grand Churchill (7 1/2 by 56) will come in humidors made by Elie Bleu, and only 450 will be made. The 2018 Edición Limitadas were announced, and they will be the Romeo y Julieta Tacos (6 2/3 by 49), Bolivar Soberano (5 1/2 by 54) and the H. Upmann Propios (4 3/4 by 46). The 2018 Casa del Habano exclusives are a Hoyo de Monterrey Escogidos (7 by 49) and the San Cristobal de la Habana Prado, a petit pyramid at 5 by 50.

There were also line extensions announced for regular-production brands. The Partagás Linea Maduro No. 1 (5 by 52) will be joined by the Maduro No. 2, a short pyramid measuring 4 3/4 by 55, and the Maduro No. 3, a straight-sided cigar at 5 3/4 by 50. A new Le Hoyo, the Rio Seco, will be the thickest in the lineup, 5 1/2 inches long with a plump 56 ring gauge. And the value-brand Vegueros will be expanded with a 5 1/2 by 50 cigar called a Centrofinos. (All of the Festival cigars won’t appear at retail for many months; at this writing, the world still awaits some of the releases teased at the 2017 show.)

The week is about more than just cigars. The opening night at the El Laguito protocol hall, a large indoor/outdoor space with gardens and a pool, saw people milling around the grounds, puffing away on the new Cohiba. Under the stars, there were Havana Club stands serving Mojitos, and roast pork dished out by the plateful.

Los Van Van, Cuba’s best-known live-music band, hit the stage late in the evening. Tuesday was devoted to a field trip to the tobacco fields in San Juan y Martínez and San Luís. Havana’s cigar factories served as the focal point of Thursday’s activities.

After an entire day of seminars at the convention center on everything from the genetics of Cuba’s tobacco hybrids to the history of the Festival, the Wednesday-night gala at the small 19th-century Teatro Marti in Old Havana was devoted to a celebration of Cuban dance and music. After, the guests headed to the fully renovated Opera House, a stunning building ablaze with lights, where they received a selection of Cuba’s top export brands.

“There’s no business done at all,” said Walid Saleh, the managing director of Phoenicia Trading, the distributor for Habanos cigars in the Middle East. “We come every year to share our passions with cigar smokers from all over the world.” His company had 45 guests. “During daytime, you work,” said Ajay Patel, owner of the Casa del Habano in Teddington, England. “And at nighttime you party.”

The final day saw the Habanos Sommelier and the Habanos World Challenge competitions. Darius Namdar of Mark’s Club in London defeated sommeliers from Cuba, Italy and Russia to capture the Sommelier award. The World Challenge, a new event, pitted regular cigar lovers against each other in two-person teams. Raffi Der Garapetian and Alexis Tsielepis from Cyprus held off a Cuban team through several rounds of questions testing cigar knowledge.

The closing-night gala epitomizes what’s best about the festival: cigars and culture. The evening included a cavalcade of dancers and musicians in a three-hour performance, culminating with a live number by the Cuban band Orishas.

The capstone of every Festival is the auction. “The thing I love about the Festival is the money that is given and donated to the Cuban public health system,” said Gary Heathcott, the American auctioneer. “It is the single largest fundraiser every year for public health in this country. That means a lot to me.”

When Heathcott’s gavel fell for the last time, the seven humidors had raised \$1.8 million. The highest bid of \$418,000 went for the Cohiba humidor, which came with 550 Cohiba cigars; the winning bidder was Hamed Abouzahr, a Lebanese Peruvian who distributes Habanos cigars in Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador. “We are human,” Abouzahr told CIGAR AFICIONADO. “We did this for the public health of Cuba.” The biggest buyer of the night was Hamad Al-Shamsi of Dubai, who purchased three of the six humidors for a total outlay of \$750,000. Other buyers included Bedar Zeidan of Phoenicia Trading, consumer Alex Wong from Hong Kong and Reza Valibalouch, a Belgian cigar merchant.

Amid the final night’s hullabaloo, Jeff Borysiewicz, the owner of Corona Cigar in Orlando, Florida, and a first-time visitor to Cuba, said, “It was totally an eye-opening experience and not what I expected. I mean that in a good way. I’ve always had a lot of respect for the tobacco growers and farmers here, but I had never understood the country of Cuba. It was more beautiful. More advanced. It is the most international of all the festivals I’ve been to. I’m meeting people from China, Dortmund, Britain. And the common denominator is that everyone loves cigars.” ♦

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Barnaby W. Horton gets an autographed CIGAR AFICIONADO from Jamie Widdoes, the actor who played Hoover in *Animal House*, in New York City.



Great cigars for a great cause. The brothers of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity gather to support the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association Service Dogs for Warriors Program at their sixth annual charity cigar night in Holmdel, New Jersey. The program helps train service dogs that assist veterans suffering from PTSD.



Marvin R. Shanken, NBA legend Julius "Dr. J" Erving and Larry Mullin of Seminole Gaming enjoy fine cigars at 1000 North in Jupiter, Florida.



A birthday spent with good smokes, good drinks and good friends. From left, Dr. James Mauck, Dr. Geof Rogers, Counselor David Mirken and Dr. Bill Buckley savor glasses of Scotch and premium handrolled cigars in celebration of Dr. Rogers' milestone 60th at Knollwood Country Club in Granger, Indiana.



Benny Corbello, left, and David Fontenot, right, of Lafayette, Louisiana, pose for a picture and share a smoke with cigarmaker Litto Gomez of La Flor Dominicana cigars at their go-to vacation stop: Harbor Cigars in Destin, Florida.



Nothing complements an exciting round of golf better than a great cigar. Jackson Stewart, Travis Stewart, Brad Webb and Mark Taylor puff away at the Pete Dye-designed Whistling Straits golf course in Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

MBOMBAY GAAJA



Good friends Rich Schneider, Ray Schmidt, Mike Hopkins and Mike Schmidt puffing on cigars in the sunshine with Richard Warren, center, of Great Lake Tobacconist in Put-in-Bay, Ohio.



Joseph Hartman and a group of best friends from Wyoming travel to the Los Chañares Dove Hunting Lodge in Córdoba, Argentina, to hunt and relax with plenty of cigars and whiskey.



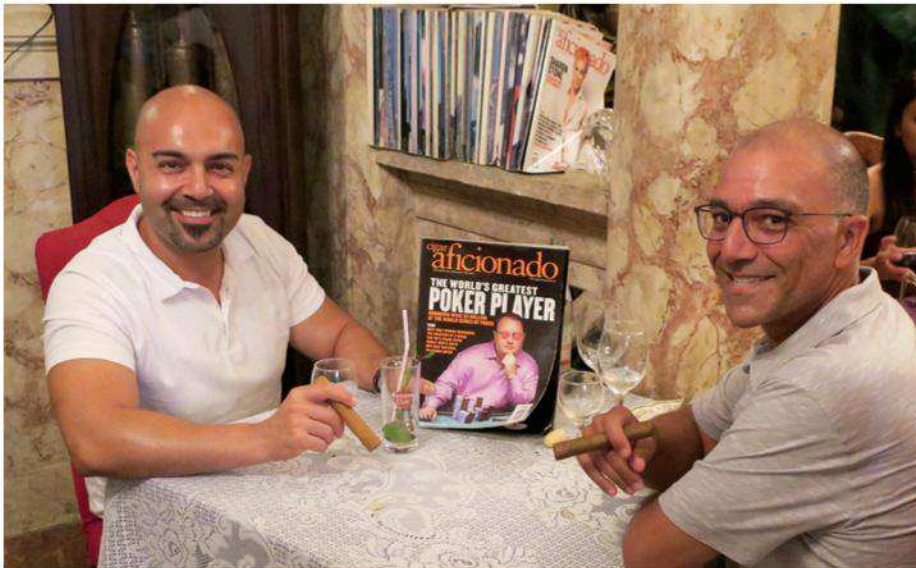
Jonathan and Ana Hidalgo celebrate their wedding at Shangri-La Springs in Bonita Springs, Florida, by smoking Rocky Patel cigars with none other than Rocky Patel, Nish Patel and Nimish Desai.

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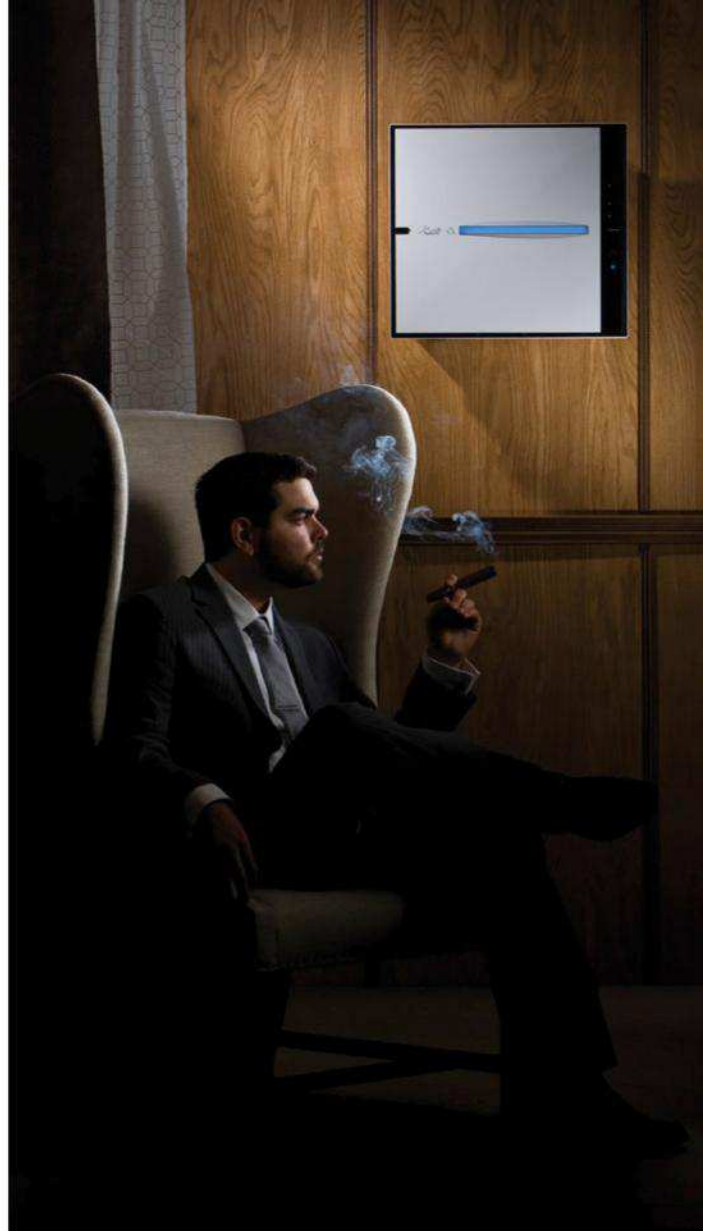
Jack Constantine, his sons Ernie and James, and his cousin Harry Demir puff on Montecristo No. 2 cigars at the Open Championship at Royal Birkdale Golf Club in Southport, England.



Dr. Ario Barzin and Naisan Modjarrad enjoy a taste of the good life as they read CIGAR AFICIONADO magazine before lighting up a cigar at the San Cristóbal Paladar in Havana, Cuba.



Corey Berardicurti of Tampa, Florida, and his brother Paul Berardicurti of Penfield, New York, share a cigar while spending time together at Old Key West Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Florida.



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Jaime Reyes, Al González and Drew González savor a pairing of Ramon Allones cigars with Cuban rum at the La Casa del Habano in Saint Kitts and Nevis with manager Orlens Guerra.



Jason R. Ramage and Jerrie K. Ramage, both proud veterans, share a special father-son moment while trading war stories over cigars on Father's Day in Columbus, Ohio.



Rene Guenette, Bob Beretta, Ken Fanion and Ron Wnuk relax with a pint of Guinness and a couple of excellent cigars after playing a round at the Old Course in St Andrews, Scotland.



Kenny Johnson and John Floyd indulge in the good life with Cuban Romeo y Julieta Wide Churchill cigars and a bottle of Old Rip Van Winkle 10 Year Bourbon in Linda Vista, California.



After reeling in a 100-pound tuna off the coast of Panama, Rick Davis, Scott Reed and Fred Maas celebrate the right way, by lighting up and savoring a few Cuban Partagás cigars.



Jay Cleary and his father Tom Cleary share a special bonding moment on Father's Day while puffing on a couple of premium smokes poolside in Columbia, South Carolina.



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The team at Cowbell Brewing Co. commemorates a successful first brew at its new Destination Brewery in Blyth, Ontario, by lighting up cigars from A.J. Fernandez on the brewhouse deck.



Ron Merroit, Bobby Garland, Mike McCoy, John Mowery, Steve Johnson and Phil Harris celebrate a retirement event with cigars and libations at the Ashton Cigar Bar in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



Dario Beragamo, Carlos "Carlito" Fuente Jr. and Tom Celani enjoy an evening of drinks, dancing and cigars at the Celani Family Foundation's Cars & Cigars fundraiser in Detroit, Michigan.

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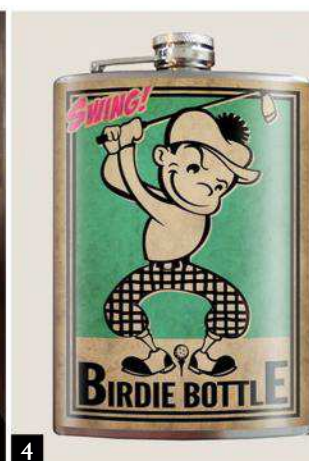
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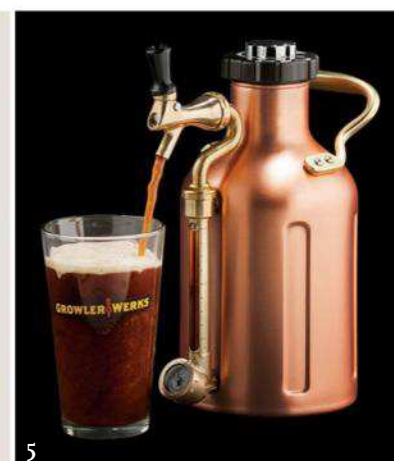
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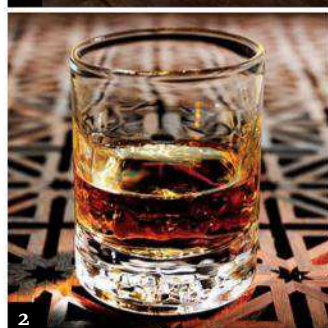
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If you're musically inclined and have a hankering to lay down some tracks of your own, consider Sonastério Studios, Brazil's world-class destination recording studio and luxury home. Walters-Storyk Design Group, a global architectural-acoustic consulting firm, has created facilities atop a mountain near Belo Horizonte. As well as state-of-the-art equipment it also offers three guest bedrooms with five-star amenities. The rock group Daparte recently recorded there. Even if you can't play with the same chops, you can enjoy the sweeping views. sonasterio.com or wsdg.com

2 ROCKING THE ROCKS GLASS—GLASS BLOWER BEN

Want a really old-fashioned Old Fashioned? Or just whiskey—on the rocks or neat? Ben Dombey, a New Orleans master craftsman, will make you the glass the old school way: by blowing it. His inspiration came on a trip to Scotland and he spent years developing the right technique for the hefty vessel. As the glasses are created under intense heat, they all have the unique texture of a handmade piece, but they can be further customized by stamping the image of your choice into the base of the glass while the material is still molten. glassblowerben.com

3 KNICE KNIFE—WILLIAM HENRY

Maybe the reason guys don't go in for jewelry much is that they want their adornments to be purposeful and not just ornamental. Hence, watches tell time and links keep your cuffs together. And who hasn't been in a pinch when a blade would come in handy? Enter William Henry with a range of adorned guy stuff. The Kestrel Zephyr pocketknife (\$1,350), has a hand-forged, Damascus steel-blade and 24-karat-gold and fossil-coral frame. williamhenry.com

4 THE FLASK TASK—TRIXIE & MILO

In 2011, the concept behind starting Trixie & Milo was to bring back high-quality to men's gifts for occasions like weddings. The Portland, Oregon wife-and-husband team of the same name first got into antique-styled drink ware (they now make retro-style bags, shop aprons and multi-tools). They really found their niche with drinking flasks. Applying vintage artwork to well-crafted, stainless-steel containers, they've come up with a broad spectrum of retro-styled (often humorous) flasks for a number of personality types. trixieandmilo.com

5 PRESSURED SUDS—GROWLERWERKS

A beer growler is the perfect vessel to transport choice craft brews from the draft to your house. Standard growlers, though, let in air upon opening, which can spoil your beer and cause it to turn flat. GrowlerWerks 64oz. copper-plated uKeg (\$169) keeps beer fresh for longer via its patented CO2 regulator cap. The cap automatically sets pressure to optimally carbonate your beer and can be adjusted based on the style of brew. The stainless-steel uKeg also features a vacuum-insulated double wall to keep your beer cool. growlerwerks.com

6 A HAT FOR HEMINGWAY—J. PETERMAN

Ernest Hemingway loved the manly arts of boxing and bullfighting, had his own version of Cuba's most famous cocktail (see story, page 93) and spent a heroic amount of time outdoors, at times wearing a soft cap with an extra long brim. J. Peterman sells a version of this hat, with a brim so big and sturdy you can balance a Daiquiri on it (we tried). The fitted cap, made of soft duck canvas, is comfortable, and the six brass grommets make it ideal for warm weather. The sturdy calfskin brim is what makes this hat stand out. It's built to shade your eyes when The Sun Also Rises. jpeterman.com

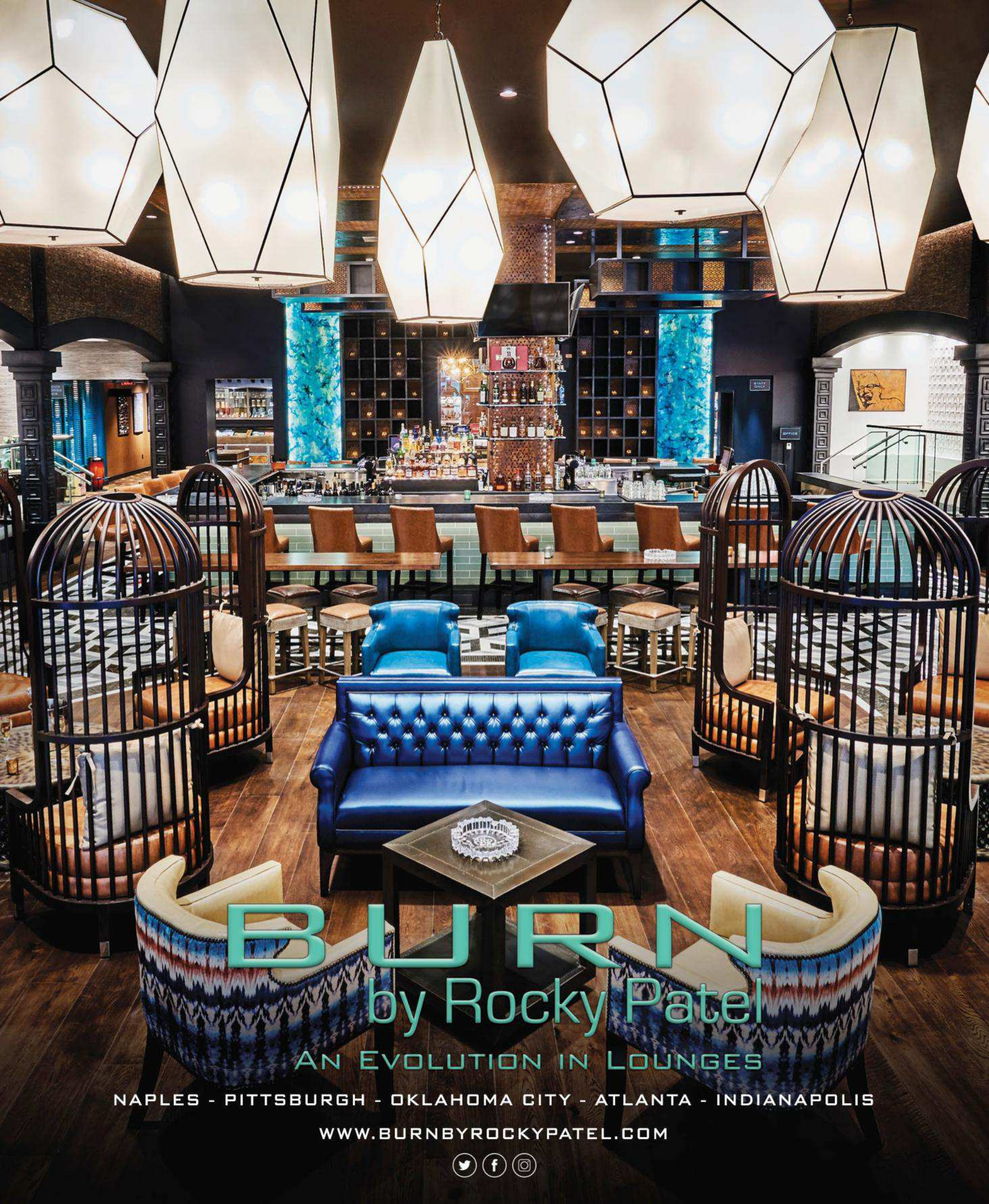
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